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THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF THE

REV. JOHN HOWE, M. A.

WITH

A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING

I. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

II. THE VANITY OF MAN AS MORTAL.

III. OF PATIENCE IN EXPECTATION OF FUTURE BLESSEDNESS—WITH AN APPENDIX.

IV. FUNERAL SERMONS FOR MINISTERS.

1. FOR MR. RICH. FAIRCLOUGH, ON MATT. 25. 21.

2. FOR MR. RICHARD ADAMS, ON PHILIPP. 1. 23.

3. FOR DR. WILLIAM BATES, ON JOHN 11. 16.

4. FOR MR. MATTHEW MEAD, ON 1 TIM. 4. 16.

5. FOR MR. PETER VINK, ON ACTS 5. 20.

EDITED BY THE

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THE

BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

OPENED,

AND FURTHER RECOMMENDED FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF

THE VANITY OF

THIS MORTAL LIFE,

In Two Treatises,

On Psalm 17. 15. and Psalm 89. 47.

When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is 1. *John* 3. 2.

Αλλα τα κακα ϑ δυναΐον εν ϑεοις ιδρυσθαι τον δε ϑνητην φυσιν, και τονδε τον τοπον περιπολει εξ αναΐκης. Διο και πειρασθαι χρη ενϑενδε εκεισε φευγειν οτι ταχιςα. Φυγη δε ομοιωσις ϑεω κατα το δυνατον, ομοιωσις δε δικαιον και οσιον μετα φρονησεως γενεσθαι.

It is impossible that vice should find a place in the abode of the Gods; but it necessarily adheres to a mortal nature, and to the present world. It is therefore our duty to shun it with the utmost eagerness, or, in other words to seek the highest possible resemblance to God, which resemblance consists in rectitude, holiness and wisdom. Plat. in Theæt.

TO THE READER.

I am not at all solicitous, that the world should know the history of the conception of this treatise. If there be any thing that shall recompense the pains of such as may think fit to give themselves the trouble of perusing it, in the work itself, I should yet think it too much an undervaluing of them, if I did reckon the minuter circumstances relating thereto, fit matter for their entertainment. Nor am I more concerned to have it known what were the inducements to the publication of it. Earnest protestations and remonstrations of our good intentions in such undertakings, as they leave men still at liberty to believe or doubt at their pleasure; so they gain us little if they be believed. It is no easy matter, to carry one even, constant tenour of spirit through a work of time. Nor is it more easy to pass a settled invariable judgment concerning so variable a subject; when a heart that may seem wholly framed and set for God this hour, shall look so quite like another thing the next, and change figures and postures almost as often as it doth thoughts. And if a man should be mistaken in judging himself, it would little mend the matter, to have deceived others also into a good opinion of him. But if he can approve himself to God in the simplicity of an honest and undeceived heart, The peace that ensues, is a secret between God and him. They are theatre enough to one another, as he (Seneca) said to his friend. It is an inclosed pleasure: a joy which the stranger cannot intermeddle with.

It is therefore any man's concernment herein rather to satisfy himself than the world. And the world's rather to understand the design of the work than the author; and whither it tends, rather than whereto he meant it. And it is obvious enough, to what good purposes discourses of this nature may serve. This is, in the design of it,

wholly practical; hath little or nothing to do with disputation. If there be any whose business it is to promote a private, divided interest; or who place the sum of their religion in an inconsiderable and doubtful opinion; it doth not unhallow their altars, nor offer any affront to their idol. It intends no quarrel to any contending, angry party: but deals upon things in the substance whereof christians are at a professed agreement. And hath therefore the greater probability of doing good to some, without the offence of any. It is indeed equally matter of complaint and wonder, that men can find so much leisure to divert from such things, wherein there is so much both of importance and pleasure, unto (what one would think should have little of temptation or allurement in it) contentious jangling. It might rather be thought its visible fruits and tendencies should render it the most dreadful thing to every serious beholder. What tragedies hath it wrought in the Christian church! Into how weak and languishing a condition hath it brought the religion of professed christians! Hence have risen the intemperate, preternatural heats and angers that have spent its strength and spirits, and make it look with so meagre and pale a face. We have had a greater mind to dispute than live; and to contend about what we know not, than to practise the far greater things we know; and which more directly tend to nourish and maintain the divine life. The author of that ingenious sentence, *pruritus disputandi scabies Ecclesiæ, the itch of disputing is the distemper of the church*, (whoever he were) hath fitly expressed what is the noisome product of the itch of disputing. It hath begot the ulcerous tumours, which, besides their own offensive soreness, drain the body, and turn what should nourish that, into nutriment to themselves. And its effects are not more grievous than the pleasures which it affects and pursues are uncouth and unnatural: *ut ulcera quædam nocituras manus appetunt et tacta gaudent, et fœdam corporum scabiem delectat quicquid exasperat: Non aliter dixerim his mentibus in quas voluptates velut mala ulcera eruperunt, voluptati esse laborem, vexationemque: as ulcers of a certain kind invite and are pleased with the touch of a rough and injurious hand, and as that only gratifies which irritates a body covered over with a loathsome eruption, so to those minds which are afflicted with the noxious ulcer of forbidden pleasure, labour and vexation are the only delight.* Sen: de tranquillitate animi. That only pleases which exasperates, (as the moralist aptly expresses some like disaffection of diseased minds.) What to a sound spirit would be a pain, is to these a pleasure.

Which is, indeed, the triumph of the disease, that it adds unto torment, reproach and mockery, and imposes upon men by so ridiculous a delusion (while they are made to take pleasure in punishing themselves) that even the most sober can scarce look on in a fitter posture, than with a compassionate smile. All which were yet somewhat more tolerable, if that imagined, vanishing pleasure were not the whole of their gain; or if it were to be hoped, that so great a

present real pain and smart, should be recompensed with as real a consequent fruit and advantage. But we know, that generally by how much any thing is more disputable, the less it is necessary or conducible to the Christian life. God hath graciously provided that what we are to live by, should not cost us so dear. And possibly, as there is less occasion of disputing about the more momentous things of religion ; so there may be somewhat more of modesty and awe in reference to what is so confessedly venerable and sacred, (though too many are over bold even here also) than so foolishly to trifle with such things. Therefore more commonly, where that humour prevails, men divert from those plainer things, with some slighter and superficial reverence to them, but more heartily esteeming them insipid and jejune, because they have less in them to gratify that appetite, and betake themselves to such things about which they may more plausibly contend ; and then, what pitiful trifles oftentimes take up their time and thoughts ; questions and problems of like weighty importance, very often, with those which, the abovenamed author (Sen. de Brev. vit.) tells us, this disease among the Greeks prompted them to trouble themselves about, as, " What number of rowers Ulysses had ? which was written first, the Iliad or the Odysses, &c. ? So that (as he saith) they spent their lives very operously doing nothing. Their conceits being such, that if they kept them to themselves, they could yield them no fruit ; and if they published them to others, they should not seem thereby the more learned, but the more troublesome," to this purpose he truly speaks. And is it not to be resented, that men should sell away the solid strength and vital joy which a serious soul would find in substantial religion, for such toys ! Yea, and not only famish themselves but trouble the world, and embroil the church with their impertinencies ! If a man be drawn forth to defend an important truth against an injurious assault, it were treacherous self-love to purchase his own peace by declining it. Or if he did sometimes turn his thoughts to some of our petty questions, that with many are so hotly agitated, for recreation-sake, or to try his wit and exercise his reason, without stirring his passions to the disturbance of others or himself; it were an innocent divertisement, and the best purpose that things of that nature are capable of serving. But when contention becomes a man's element, and he cannot live out of that fire, strains his wit and racks his invention to find matter of quarrel ; is resolved, nothing said or done by others shall please him, only because he means to please himself in dissenting ; disputes only that he may dispute, and loves dissension for itself : this is the unnatural humour that hath so unspeakably troubled the church, and dispirited religion, and filled men's souls with wind and vanity ; yea, with fire and fury. This hath made christians gladiators, and the Christian world a clamorous theatre, while men have equally affected to contend, and to make ostentation of their ability so to do.

And, surely, as it is highly pleasurable to retire oneself, so it is charitable to call aside others out of this noise and throng, to consi-

der silently and feed upon the known and agreed things of our religion; which immediately lead to both the duties and delights of it. Among which there are none more evident and undoubted, none less entangled with controversy, none more profitable and pleasant than the future blessedness of the righteous, which this discourse treats of. The last end is a matter so little disputable, that it is commonly thought (which is elsewhere more distinctly spoken to) not to be the object of election, and so not of deliberation consequently, but of simple intention only, because men are supposed to be generally agreed as touching that. And the knowledge and intention of it is apparently the very soul of religion; animates, directs, enlivens, and sweetens the whole thereof. Without which, religion were the vainest, most unsavoury thing in the world. For what where there left of it, but an empty unaccountable formality, a series of spiritless and merely scenical observances and actions without a design? For whereas all men's actions else, mediately tend to the last end, but that not being in view with the most, they pitch upon other intervenient ends; which, though abstracted from the last, should not be; yet they are actually to them the reason of their actions, and infuse a vigor and liveliness into them: religion aiming immediately at the last end, that being taken away, hath no rational end or design at all. And it cannot but be an heartless business, with great solemnity, in a continued course, to do nothing but professedly trifle, or keep up a custom of certain solemn performances which have no imaginable scope or end. And because the more clearly this our last end is understood, the more powerfully and sweetly it attracts and moves the soul, this treatise endeavours to give as plain and positive a state and notion of it as the text insisted on, compared with other scriptures, would afford to so weak an eye.

And because men are so apt to abuse themselves with the vain and self-contradicting hopes of attaining this end, without ever having their spirits framed to it, or walking in the way that leads thereto, as if they could come to heaven by chance, or without any design or care of theirs; the proportion is endeavoured to be shewn, between that divine likeness, in the vision and participation whereof this blessedness, consists, and the righteousness that disposes and leads to it. Which may it be monitory to the ungodly and prophane, who hate and scorn the likeness of God wherever they behold it. And let me tell such from (better-instructed) pagans, *Nihil est Deo similius aut gratius quam vir animo perfecte bonus, &c. that there is nothing more like or more acceptable to God, than a man that is in the temper of his soul truly good, who excels other men, as he is himself excelled* (pardon his hyperbole) *by the immortal God.* Apul. de Deo Socratis. *Inter bonos viros ac Deum amicia est, conciliante virtute amicitiam dico? etiam necessitudo, et similitudo, &c. that between God and good men there is a friendship, by means of virtue; a friendship, yea, a kindred, a likeness; in as much truly as the good man differs from God but in time* (here sprinkle a grain or two) *being his disciple, imitator and very off-spring.* (Sen. de Pro.) Νεμεσα

γαρ ο θεος οταν τις ψεγη τον εαυτω ομοιον, η επαινη τον εαυτω εναντιως εχοντα, εστι δ' ουτος ο αγαθος.——παλιν ιερωτατον εστιν ανθρωπος αγαθος, και μιαρωτατον ο πονηρος : *that God is full of indignation against such as reproach one that is like to him, or that praise one that is contrarily affected* (or unlike) ; *but such is the good man* (that is, he is one like God). *A good man* (as it shortly after follows) *is the holiest thing in the world, and a wicked man the most polluted thing.*——Plat. in Minoe.

And let me warn such haters of holiness and holy men in the words of this author immediately subjoined ; Τουτο δ' ενεκα φροσω, ινα μη ανθρωπος ων ανθρωπος, εις ηρω Διος υιον λογω εξαμαρτανης : "*and this I say for this cause, that thou being but a man, the son of a man, no more offend in speaking against a hero, one who is a son of God.*

Methinks men should be ashamed to profess the belief of a life to come, while they cannot behold without indignation, nor mention but with derision, that holiness without which it can never be attained, and which is indeed the seed and principle of the thing itself. But such are not likely much to trouble themselves with this discourse. There is little in it indeed of art and ornament to invite or gratify such as the subject itself invites not. And nothing at all but what was apprehended might be some way useful. The affectation of garnishing a margin with the names of authors, I have ever thought a vain pedantry ; yet have not declined the occasional use of a few that occurred. He that writes to the world, must reckon himself debtor to the wise and unwise. If what is done shall be found with any to have promoted its proper end ; his praises to God shall follow it (as his prayers do that it may) who professes himself,

A well-willer to the souls of men.

J. HOWE.

CHRISTIAN READER.

You whose hearts are set on heaven, who are daily laying up a treasure there, here is a welcome messenger, to tell you more than perhaps you have well considered, of the nature of your future blessedness, and to illustrate the map of the land of promise, and to bring you another cluster of its grapes: here is a useful help to make you know that holiness doth participate of glory, and that heaven is at least virtually in the seed of grace. Though this life be properly called a life of faith, as contradistinct from the intuition and fruition hereafter, as well as from the lower life of sense; yet is it a great truth, and not sufficiently considered and improved, that we have here more than faith, to acquaint us with the blessedness expected. Between faith and glory, there is the spirit of holiness, the love of God, the heavenly desires, which are kindled by faith, and are those branches on which the happy flower and fruit must grow: they are the name and mark of God upon us: they are our earnest, our pledge and the first fruits. And is not this more than a word of promise only? Therefore though all christians must live by faith, marvel not that I tell you, that you may, you must have more than faith. Is not a pledge and earnest, a first-fruits more? Therefore have christians, not only a Spirit to evidence their title, but also some foretaste of heaven itself. For faith in Christ is to recover us to God, and so much as we have of God, so much of fruition; and so much as faith hath kindled in you of the love of God, so much foretaste you have of heaven; for you are deceived, if you think, that any one notion speaketh more to you of heaven and of your ultimate end, than *the love of God.* And though no unsound ill-grounded faith will serve to cause this sacred love, yet when it is caused, it over-tops this cause; and he that perceiveth the operations of a strong effectual love, hath an acquaintance with God and heaven which is above that of believing. Faith seeth the feast, but love is the tasting of it. And therefore it is, that the holiest souls stick closest unto God, because (though their reasoning faculty may be defective) they know him by the highest and most tenacious kind of knowledge which this world affordeth, (as I have lately shewed

elsewhere). Here you have described to you, the true witness of the Spirit; not that of supposed internal voices, which they are usually most taken up with, who have the smallest knowledge and faith, and love, and the greatest self-esteem, or spiritual pride, with the strongest phantasies and passions: but the objective and the sealing testimony, the divine nature, the renewed image of God, whose children are known by being like to their heavenly Father, even by being holy as he is holy. This is the Spirit of adoption, by which we are inclined, by holy love to God and confidence in him, to cry Abba Father, and to fly unto him: the Spirit of sanctification is hereby in us the Spirit of adoption: for both signify but the giving us that love to God, which is the filial nature, and our Father's image.

And this treatise doth happily direct thee to that faithful beholding God in righteousness, which must here begin this blessed assimilation, which full intuition will for ever perfect. It is a happy sign that God is about to repair our ruins and divisions, when he stirreth up his servants to speak so much of heaven, and to call up the minds of impatient complainers, and contentious censurers, and ignorant self-conceited dividers, and of worldly, unskilful, and unmerciful pastors, to look to that state where all the godly shall be one, and to turn those thoughts to the furtherance of holiness, to provoke one another to love and to good works, which too many lay out upon their hay and stubble, and to call men from judging and despising each other (and worse than both these) about their meats and drinks, and days, to study righteousness and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ (in which his kingdom doth consist) is acceptable to God, and approved of men, that are wise and good. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. While the contentious for meats will destroy the work of God, (Rom. 14. 17, 20.) the union between peace and holiness is so strict, that he that truly promoteth one promoteth both, Heb. 12. 14. Jam. 3. 17. The true way of our union is excellently described. Eph. 4. 11,——16. If any plain, unlearned readers shall blame the accurateness of the stile, they must remember, that those persons have not the least need to hear of heaven, and to be drawn up from the vanities of earth who cannot digest a looser stile. As God hath endued the worthy author with a more than ordinary measure of judiciousness even soundness and accurateness, of understanding, with seriousness, spirituality, and heavenly mind; so we have for our common benefit, the effects of all these happy qualifications, in this judicious, heavenly discourse. And if my recommendations may in any measure further your acceptance, improvements and practising of so edifying a treatise, it will answer the ends of him who waiteth with you in hope for the same salvation.

RICHARD BAXTER.

THE

BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

PSALM XVII. 15.

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.

CHAP. I.

I. A proemial discourse. II. A reflection upon some foregoing verses of the psalm, by way of introduction to the text. III. A consideration of its somewhat various readings, and of its *literal* importance, IV. A discussion of its *real* importance so far as is necessary to the settling the subject of the present discourse.

I. THE continual mixture of good and evil in this present state of things, with its uncertain fluctuations, and subjection to perpetual changes; do naturally prompt a considering mind to the belief and hope of another, that may be both more perfect, and more permanent. For certainly it could never be a design adequate (or any way agreeable) to the divine wisdom and goodness, that the blessed God should raise such a thing as this lower creation out of nothing, only to give himself the temporary pleasure of beholding the alternate joys and sorrows of (the best part thereof) his reasonable creature seated in it: nor a delight at all proportionable to an eternally happy Being, when he hath connaturalized such a creature to this sensible world; only to take notice how variously the passions he hath planted in him, may be moved and stirred by the variety of occasions which he shall thence be presented with; and what sudden and contrary impressions may be made upon his easy passive senses, by the interchanged strokes and touches of contrary objects:

how quickly he can arise him into a transport of high contentment and pleasure, and then how soon he can again reduce him to a very paroxysm of anguish and despair. It would discover us to have very vile and low thoughts of God, if we did not judge it altogether unanswerable to his perfections, to design no further thing in creating this world, and placing such a creature as man in it, than only to please himself for a while with such a spectacle, and then at last clear the stage, and shut up all again in an eternal, silent darkness. If we could suppose a man furnished with such power, he would surely add little to the reputation of his being wise or good beyond other men, by a design so to use it. Much less can we think it worthy of God to perpetuate such a state of things as this, and continue a succession of such persons and actions as we now behold in the world, through eternal generations, only to perpetuate to himself the same pleasure in the exercise of his immense power upon created natures, over which he hath so infinite advantage.

And indeed nothing can be more unconceivable, than that the great Creator and Author of all things, should frame a creature of so vast comprehension as the spirit of man, put into it a capacity of knowing and conversing with himself, give it some prospect of his own glory and blessedness; raise thereby, in many, boundless unsatisfied desires after him, and unexpressible pleasure in the pre-conceived hope of being received into the communion of that glory and blessedness; and yet defeat and blast so great an expectation, by the unsuspected reducement of the very subject of it again to nothing. Yea, and that he should deal herein (as in that case he must) the most hardly with the best: and that such souls, whose mere love and devotedness to him, had made them abandon the pleasures of this life, and run through whatsoever difficulties for his sake, should fare worse than the very worst; were, beyond all the rest, most utterly unimaginable, and a thought which pagan-reason hath not known how to digest or entertain. *If* (saith one, and he speaks the sense of many others, as well as his own) Ει μεν εν αμα τοις σωματι διαλυομενοις και το της ψυχης ο τι δε ποτε ο εστιν εκεινο συνδιαλυεσθαι, &c. *with the dissolution of our bodies, the essence of the soul, whatsoever that be, should be dissolved too, and for ever cease to be any thing; I know not how I can account them blessed, that never having enjoyed any good as the reward of their virtue, have even perished for virtue itself.* Dionys. Halicar. Antq. Rom. lib. 8.

Wherefore it is consequent, that this present state is only intended for trial to the spirits of men, in order to their attainment as of a better state in a better world: that is, inasmuch as the infinitely wise and blessed God given being had to such a creature

as man, in which both worlds (the material and the immaterial) did meet; and who, in respect of his earthly and spiritual natures, had in him somewhat suitable to each. And whereas this creature had lost (with his interest) his very inclination to the spiritual objects, and enjoyments of the purer, immaterial world (wherein alone his true blessedness could consist), suffered a vile depression of his spirit unto this gross corporeal world, and hereby brought himself under a necessity of being miserable, his nobler part having nothing now to satisfy it, but what it was become unsuitable and disaffected to: His merciful Creator, being intent upon his restitution, thought fit not to bring it about by a sudden and violent hand (as it were to catch him into heaven against his will): but to raise his spirit into its just dominion and sovereignty in him, by such gradual methods as were most suitable to a rational, intelligent nature; that is, to discover to him, that he had such a thing as spirit about him; whence it was fallen, how low it was sunk, to what state it was yet capable to be raised, and what he had designed and done for its happy recovery. And hence by the secret and powerful insinuations of his own light and grace, to awaken his drowsy and slumbering reason, and incline his perverse and wayward will to the consideration and choice of such things as that felicity consists in; which that better world can afford, and his better part enjoy.

And while he propounds such things to him, how reasonable and agreeable was it, that he should keep him sometime under a just probation (yea, how much was there in it of a gracious and compassionate indulgence, often to renew the trial), whether he would yet bestir himself, and (having so great hopes before him, and such helps and aids afforded him, and ready to be afforded) apply, at last, his intellectual and elective powers, to mind and close with so gracious overtures, in order to his own eternal advancement and blessedness? Nor was it an unreasonable expectation that he should do so. For, however the temporal good and evil that may constantly affect his sensitive part and powers, be present and near; but the eternal misery or blessedness of his soul, future and remote: yet inasmuch as he is capable of understanding the vast disproportions of time and eternity; of a mortal flesh, and an immortal spirit: how preposterous a course were it, and unworthy of a man; yea, how dishonourable and reproachful to his Maker, should he prefer the momentary pleasures of narrow, incapacious sense, to the everlasting enjoyments of an enlarged comprehensive spirit? Or, for the avoiding the pains and miseries of the former kind, incur those of the latter? Whence also the Holy God doth not expect and require only, that men should make that wiser choice; but doth most justly lay the weight of their eternal states upon their doing, or not doing so. And in that day when he shall render

to every one according to his works, make this the rule of his final judgment, to allot to them, who by a patient continuance in well-doing, seek for honour, glory, and immortality, eternal life. To the rest, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, &c. and that whether they be Jews or Gentiles. Rom. 2. 6,—9. Nor is it a new thing in the world, that some among the children of men should in this comply with the righteous will of God, and so judge and choose for themselves, as he is pleased to direct and prescribe, it is a course approved by the concurrent suffrage of all them, in all times and ages, into whose minds the true light hath shined, and whom God hath inspired with that wisdom whereby he maketh wise to salvation. That numerous assembly of the perfected spirits of the just, have agreed in this common resolution; and did in their several generations, before they had passed this state of trial, with an heroic magnanimity trample this present world under their feet, and aspire to the glory of the world to come; relieving themselves against all the grievances they have suffered from such, whose portion is in this life with the alone hope and confidence of what they were to enjoy in another.

II. And hereof we have an eminent and illustrious instance in this context, where the ground is laid of the following discourse. For introduction whereto, observe that—the title speaks the psalm a prayer of David. The matter of the prayer is, preservation from his enemies. Not to go over the whole psalm, we have in the 13 and 14 verses, the sum of his desires, with a description of the persons he prays to be delivered from: in which description every character is an argument to enforce his prayer.

From the wicked: as though he had said they are equally enemies to thee and me; not more opposite to me by their cruelty, than by their wickedness they are to thee. Vindicate then, at once, thyself, and deliver me.

Thy sword, thy hand. Thou canst as easily command and manage them, as a man may wield his sword, or move his hand. Wilt thou suffer thine own sword, thine own hand, to destroy thine own servant?

Men of the world, which have their portion in this life: time and this lower world, bound all their hopes and fears. They have no serious believing apprehensions of any thing beyond this present life; therefore have nothing to withhold them from the most injurious violence, if thou withhold them not; men that believe not another world, are the ready actors of any imaginable mischiefs and tragedies in this.

Whose belly thou fillest. That is, their sensual appetite; (as

oftentimes that term is used, Rom. 16. 18. Phil. 3. 19.) *with thy hid treasures*, namely, the riches which either God is wont to hide in the bowels of the earth, or lock up in the repository of providence, dispensing them at his own pleasure.

They are full of children. So it appears by that which follows, it ought to be read, and not according to that gross, but easy (υων for υιων) mistake of some transcribers of the seventy. As if in all this he had pleaded thus; "Lord, thou hast abundantly indulged those men already, what need they more? They have themselves, from thy unregarded bounty, their own vast swollen desires sufficiently filled, enough for their own time; and when they can live no longer in their persons, they may in their posterity, and leave not strangers, but their numerous offspring, their heirs. Is it not enough that their avarice be gratified, except their malice be also? that they have whatsoever they can conceive desirable for themselves, unless they may also infer whatever they can think mischievous on me? To this description of his enemies, he *ex opposito*, subjoins some account of himself in this his closure of the psalm: *As for me*, here he is at his statique point; and, after some appearing discomposure, his spirit returns to a consistency, in consideration of his own more happy state, which he opposes and prefers to theirs, in the following respects. That *they* were wicked, *he* righteous. "I will behold thy face in righteousness." That *their* happiness was worldly, terrene, such only as did spring from the earth; *his* heavenly and divine, such as should result from the face and image of God. *Theirs* present, temporary, compassed within this life; *his* future, everlasting, to be enjoyed when he should awake. *Theirs* partial, defective, such as would but gratify their bestial part, fill their bellies; *his* adequate, complete (the ενδαιμονια τȣ συνετȣ *a happiness of proportion*) such as should satisfy the man. "I shall be satisfied, &c.

III. The variety in rendering this verse (to be seen by comparing the original and translation noted in the margin) need not give us any trouble, the differences not being of great moment, nor our own reading liable to exception. The word תמונה about which is the greatest diversity, hath the significancy we

אני בצדק אחזה פניך אשבעה בהקיץ תמונתך

Sept. Εγω δε εν δικαιοσυνη οφθησομαι, τω προσωπω σȣ χορταθησομαι εν τω οφθησαι την δοξαν σȣ. *But I shall appear in righteousness, I shall be satisfied with thy face, when I shall see thy glory.* The vulgar Latin, *Ego autem in justitia apparebo conspectui tuo, satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua.* Exactly following the seventy, as doth the Ethiopic. The Caldee paraphrase disagrees little; the Arabic less; the Syriac mistook it seems תמונה for אמונה, and so read that word faith which we read likeness.

here give it, in the second commandment, and constantly elsewhere. And then, what more proper English can this text, be capable of, than it hath in our bibles? Each word hath its true and genuine import; and the syntax is sufficiently regular, and grammatical of the whole. Only as to the former, that usual and obvious observation must here have place; that the ב prefixed to צדק, and which with it, we read *in righteousness*, doth often signify among its various acceptations, *by* or *through*; and that, not only as denoting instrumentality; but more at large, the place of any medium necessary to the attainment of the end it subserves to; whence the same use of the Greek ἐν, that answers thereunto, is wont to go for a Hebraism.

And as to the latter, the only thing liable to controversy, is whether the gerund בהקיץ is to be construed with the person speaking, *when I awake;* or *in my awaking*, or with the *thing;* the likeness or image spoken of *in the awaking of thine image*, or *when thine image shall awake:* and I conceive we need not discuss it, but following our own translation, leave the judgment of it to the ear itself, which (as Elihu tells us) trieth words.

IV. In the mean time, the *real* importance of this scripture more calls for discussion than the *literal*; concerning which, a threefold inquiry will be necessary for the settling the subject of the following discourse.—What relation this *righteousness* must be understood to have to the vision of God's face, and the other consequent blessedness.—What time or state *awaking* refers to, and—What is intended by the *likeness of God*. To the *first* of these. It is only necessary to say at present, that the already noted import of the preposition *in* being supposed most suitable to this text (as apparently it is) righteousness must be looked upon in reference to this vision, not as in an idle or merely casual concomitancy, or as an unconcerned circumstance, that hath nothing to do with the business spoken of; but as in a close and intimate connexion therewith; being, first antecedent, secondly conducible, thirdly necessary thereto. Nor can I better express its place, and reference to it, generally and in one word, than in saying it qualifies for it; which how it doth, will be more proper to consider hereafter. It may now suffice to say, those words give us

Hieronymus (juxta Hebr.) reads the words exactly as we do: *Ego in justitia videbo faciem tuam, implebar, cum evigilavero, similitudine tua.*

בצדק seems best to be rendered here *by, or through righteousness*, as by the condition in which he may expect the return of God's mercies here, or the eternal vision of him hereafter, &c. So the learned Dr. Hammond, Anno. in loc. quoting also Castellio to the same purpose.

the qualified subject of this blessedness "I; in righteousness", a righteous person as such. To the *Second;* Taking it for granted, that none will understand this awaking as opposed to natural sleep: in the borrowed or tropical sense, it must be understood to intend either some better state in this life, in comparison whereof the Psalmist reckons his present state but as a sleep; or the future state of blessedness in the other life. There have been some who have understood it of the former, and thought the Psalmist to speak only of an hoped freedom from his present temporal afflictions; but then, that which will be implied, seems not so specious; that trouble and affliction should be signified by the necessarily pre-supposed sleep, which sure doth more resemble rest than trouble.

I conceive it less exceptionable to refer *awaking*, to the blessed state of saints after this life. For, that saints, at that time when this was written, had the knowledge of such a state (indeed a saint not believing a life to come, is a perfect contradiction) no doubt can be made by any that hath ever so little read and compared the old and new testament. We are plainly told, that those excellent persons mentioned in the famous roll, (Heb. 11. v. 1. 16.) lived by that faith, which was the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. That of them, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while they lived in Canaan, yet sought a better, a heavenly country; confessing themselves pilgrims and strangers on earth. We know it was the more general belief of the Jews in our Saviour's time. And whence should they have it, but from the old Testament thither our Saviour remits them Joh. 5. 39. to search it out, and the way to it. The apostle saint Paul, Acts 26. & 6. 7. compared with the 8. gives it as the common faith of the twelve tribes, grounded upon the promise made to their forefathers; and thence prudentially he herein states the cause wherein he was now engaged; supposing it would be generally resented, that he should be called in question for avowing (only) so known and received a truth. Sure they were beholden to these sacred writings they had then among them, for so common a belief; and since it is out of question, from our Saviour's express words, they do contain the ground of that belief; what cause have we to be so shy of so interpreting scriptures that have a fair aspect that way? Is it, that we can devise to fasten here and there another sense upon divers such? I wonder what one text can be mentioned in all the old testament to this purpose, wherein one may not do so: And what then would be the tendency of this course, but to deny in all the particulars, what, upon so clear evidence, we are in the general forced to admit? and to put Moses, and Abraham, and David, in a lower class than Pythagoras, and Socrates, and Pla-

to? And I think it would not be easy to find one text in all that part of the Bible, where both the words thereof, and the context, do more fairly comply, that in this, so as not only to admit, but even to invite that interpretation.

For the term *awake* about which the present inquiry is, how apt and obvious is the analogy between our awaking out of natural sleep, and the holy soul's rising up out of the darkness and torpor of its present state, into the enlivening light of God's presence? It is truly said so to awake, at its first quitting these darksome regions, when it lays aside its cumbersome night-vail. It doth so more perfectly, in the joyful morning of the resurrection-day when mortality is swallowed up in life, and all the yet-hovering shadows of it are vanished and fled away. And how known and usual an application this is of the metaphorical terms of sleeping and awaking in holy writ, I need not tell them who have read the Bible. Nor doth this interpretation less fitly accord to the other contents of this verse: For to what state do the sight of God's face, and satisfaction with his likeness, so fully agree, as to that of future blessedness in the other world? But then the contexture of discourse in this and the foregoing verse together, seems plainly to determine us to this sense: for what can be more conspicuous in them, than a purposed comparison an opposition of two states of felicity mutually to each other? That of the wicked, whom he calls *men of time* (as the words מִמְתִים מִחֵלֶד are rendered by Pagninus. *Homines de tempore.* And do literally signify) and whose portion, he tells us, is in this life: and the righteous man's, his own; which he expected not to be till he should awake, that is, not till after this life.

It is further to be inquired, *thirdly*, how we are here to understand *the likeness of God?* I doubt not but we are to understand by it, his glory. And the only difficulty which it will be necessary at present to consider about it, is, whether we are to take it objectively, or subjectively; for the glory to be represented to the blessed soul, or the glory to be impressed upon it; the glory which it is to behold, or the glory it shall bear. And I conceive the difference is more easily capable of accommodation, than of a strict decision on either part. By *face* is undoubtedly meant objective glory, and that in its most perfect representation, the face being, as we know with men, the chief seat of aspectable majesty and beauty. Hence when Moses desires to see God's glory, though he did vouchsafe some discovery of it, yet he tells him his face cannot be seen. Hereupon, therefore, the next expression *thy likeness* might the more plausibly be restrained to subjective glory, so as to denote the image of God now in its most perfect impression on the bles-

sed soul. But that I insist not on. Supposing therefore, that what is signified by *face*, be repeated over again in this word *likeness*, yet I conceive the expression is not varied in vain; but having more to say than only that he expected a state of future *vision*, namely, that he assured himself of *satisfaction* too, another word was thought fit to be used that might signify also somewhat that must intervene in order to that satisfaction. It is certain the mere objective representation and consequent intuition of the most excellent (even the divine) glory, cannot satisfy a soul remaining disaffected and unsuitable thereunto. It can only satisfy, as, being represented; it forms the soul into the same image, and attempers it to itself, as if he had said "I expect hereafter to see the blessed face of God, and to be myself blessed or satisfied by his glory, at once appearing to me, and transfusing itself upon me." In short therefore, I understand by that term, the glory of God as transforming, or as impressive of itself. If therefore, glory the object of the soul's vision, shall by any be thought to be intended in it, I contend not; supposing only, that the object be taken not materially, or potentially only, for the thing visibly in itself considered; but formally, and in *esse actuali objecti;* that is, as now *actually impressing itself*, or as connoting such an impression upon the beholding soul; for so only is it productive of such a pleasure and satisfaction to it, as must ensue. As in this form of speech "such a man takes pleasure in knowledge" It is evident knowledge must be taken there both objectively, for the things known; and subjectively, for the actual perception of those things; inasmuch as, apparently, both must concur to work him delight. So it will appear, to any one that attentively considers it, glory must be taken in that passage, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Rom. 5. 2. It is divine glory both revealed and received; his exhibition and communication of it, according to his *immensity*; and our participation of it, according to our *measure*, that must concur to our eternal satisfaction. Herein the platonic adage hath evident truth in it; *Voluptatis generatio est ex infiniti et finiti copulatione. Pleasure is here certainly made up of something finite and something infinite, meeting together.* It is not (as the philosopher speaks) a χωριστον, but a ξυλον τι, not any thing *separate* from the soul, but something it *possesses*, that can make it happy. It is not happy by an incommunicate happiness, nor glorious by an incommunicate glory. Indeed, the discovery of such a glory to an inglorious, unholy soul, must rather torment than satisfy. The future glory of saints is therefore called (Rom. 8. 18.) εις ημας. *a glory to be revealed in them* (or *into them*, as the word signifies,) And in the foregoing words, the apostle assures Christ's fellow-sufferers, that they shall be glorified together with him.

Surely the notation of that word, the formal notion of glorification, cannot import so little as only to be a spectator of glory; it must signify a being made glorious.

Nor is the common and true maxim otherwise intelligible, that grace and glory differ only in degree. For certainly it could never enter into the mind of a sober man (though how dangerously some speak, that might possibly have been so if too much learning had not made them mad, will be animadverted in its place), that objective glory, and grace in saints, were the same specific) much less the same numerical) thing. It is true, that Scripture often expresses the future blessedness, by *vision* of God. But where that phrase is used to signify it alone, it is evident (as within the lower region of grace, words of knowledge do often imply affection, and correspondent impressions on the soul) it must be understood of affective transformative vision, such as hath conformity to God most inseparably conjunct with it. And, that we might understand so much, they are elsewhere both expressly mentioned together, as joint-ingredients into a saint's blessedness; as in those words so full of clear and rich sense: "When he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is." Which text I take for a plain comment upon this: and methinks it should not easily be supposable, they should both speak so near the same words, and not intend the same sense. You have in both, the same *season*, "when he shall appear," when I shall awake: the same *subject* the *righteous* person *born* of God (compare the close of the former chapter with the beginning of this); "and I in righteousness:" the same vision we shall see him as he his: "I shall behold his face:" the same *assimilation*, "We shall be like him," I shall be satisfied with his likeness; (concerning the ἕξις or habitude this vision and assimilation mutually have to one another, there will be consideration had in its place). I therefore conceive neither of these notions of the divine likeness, do exclude the other. If it be inquired, which is principally meant? That need not be determined: If the latter, it supposes the former; if the former, it infers the latter. Without the first, the other cannot be; without this other, the first cannot satisfy.

If any yet disagree to this interpretation of this text, let them affix the doctrine propounded from it, to that other last mentioned (which only hath not the express mention of a consequent satisfaction, as this hath; whence therefore, as being in this respect fuller, my thoughts were pitched upon this.) Only withal let it be considered, how much more easy it is, to imagine another sense, and suppose it possible, than to disprove this, or evince it impossible. How far probable it is, must be left to the judgment of the indifferent: with whom it may not be in-

significant to add, that thus it hath been understood by interpreters (I might adventure to say the generality) of all sorts. However the few annexed* (for I neither apprehend the necessity, nor have the present conveniency of alleging many) will suffice to avoid any imputation of singularity or novelty.

* Agitur de resurrectione et Manifestatione gloriæ cœlestis. He speaks of the resurrection and of the manifestation of the celestial glory. Ruffinus on the place. Cum apparuerit gloria tua, id est gloria resurrectionis, when thy glory shall appear, that is, the glory of the resurrection. Bede's commentary on the psalms.

How the Jews were wont to understand it, may be seen at one view in that of Petrus Galatinus in loc. Duo mi Capnio me hic per priscas Judæorum Scripturas ostendere hortaris, et generalem mortuorem resurrectionem futuram esse et eam per Messiam factum iri, Primum itaque patet non solum per sacræ scripturæ testimonia verum etiam per Talmudistarum dicta. Nam illud quidem, Psal. 17, dictum Ego in justitia &c.—sic exponunt, et presertim Rabbi Abraham Aven Ezra et Rabbi Solomo, &c. You here call upon me, my friend Capnio to prove by the ancient Jewish Scriptures; these two things—that there will be a general resurrection of the dead,and —that it will be accomplished by the Messiah. The former then appears not only from the testimony of sacred scripture, but also from the writings of the Talmudists. For indeed, what is said in the 17 Ps. I shall behold, &c. is thus expounded by them, and especially by Rabbi Abraham Aven Ezra and Rabbi Solomon, &c. And so he goes on to recite their words, De Acanis Catholicæ veritatis. on mysteries of the Catholic faith.

Opponit hæc, iis quæ de impiis dixerat. Illi Sapiunt terrena Saturantur filiis, et portionem suam in hac vita ponunt mihi vero contempta est hæc vita; ad futuram festino; ubi non in divitiis, sed in justitia videbo, non terrena hæc transitura, sed ipsam faciem tuam, nec saturabor in filiis carnis sed cum evigilavero tua similitudine, sicut. 1 Joh. 3. 2.—Cum apparuerit, &c. Luth. in Psal. He opposes these things to what he had said concerning the wicked. They mind earthly things, are filled with children, and have their portion in this life; but by me this life is despised: I hasten to that which is to come, where not in riches but in righteousness I shall see, not these earthly transitory things; but thine own face; and when I awake shall be satisfied, not with children of the flesh; but with thy likeness as 1. John 3. 2. When he shall appear, &c. Luther on Psalms.

Resurgam è mortuis—videbo te perfectissime sicut es, Similis ero tibi. I shall arise from the dead—I shall see thee most perfectly as thou art, I shall be like thee. Junius and Tremellius on 17. Psalm.

Mollerus thinks it ought not to be restrained to life eternal, but saith, some understand it of the glory, qua ornabuntur pii in vita æterna: with which the pious will be adorned in eternal life. And

adds,—et quidem non male, and certainly with justice. In—Ego vero et omnes electi tui—pie et juste, vivimus in hoc sæculo, ut aliquando in futuro sæculo videamus faciam tuam, et ea satiemur cum sc. a pulvere terræ evigilaverimus et reformati fuerimus ad similitudinem Christi tui. But I and all thine elect, live piously and righteously in this world; that at last, in the world to come, we may see thy face, and be satisfied with it; that is when we shall awake from the dust of the earth, and shall be restored to the likeness of thine anointed. Seb. Munster. in notis in loc.

Cum ego ad imaginem tuam conditus resurrexero. When I shall arise conformed to thy likeness. Vatablus: in his notes on the passage: though he adds, alii ad resurrectionem non referunt. Some do not refer it to the resurrection.

De futuræ vitæ fœlicitate ait satiabor quum expergiscar, id est quum resurgam è mortuis—Similitudine tua, hoc est videbo te perfectissime, sicuti es; et Similis ero tibi quum patefactus Christus glorioso adventu suo, 1. Joh. 3.2. Fabrit. Conc: Psal. 17.15. He says concerning the happiness of the life to come, I shall be satisfied when I shall awake, that is, when I shall arise from the dead with thy likeness; that is, I shall see thee most perfectly as thou art; and I shall be like thee when Christ shall be revealed at his glorious coming.

Describit his verbis Psalmographus beatitudinem æternam filiorum Dei. Gesnerus in loc. the Psalmist in these words describes the eternal happiness of the sons of God.

CHAP. II.

I. A summary proposal of the doctrine contained in this scripture: a distribution of it into three distinct heads of discourse. *First.* The qualified subject. *Secondly.* The nature. *Thirdly.* The season of the blessedness here spoken of. II. The first of these taken into consideration, where the qualification, *righteousness*, is treated of. About which is shewn. *First.* What it is. *Secondly.* How it qualifies.

I. NOW the foregoing sense of the words being supposed, it appears that the proper argument of this scripture, is,—The blessedness of the righteous in the other life, consisting in the vision and participation of the divine glory, with the satis-

faction that resulteth thence. In which summary account of the doctrine here contained, three general heads of discourse offer themselves to our view:—The subject, the nature, and the season of this blessedness:—Or to whom it belongs,—wherein it consists and when it shall be enjoyed.

II. We proceed to illustrate each of these.

First.—We begin with the consideration of the subject, unto whom this blessedness appertains. And we find it expressed in the text, in these only words, "I; in righteousness;" which amounts to as much as, a righteous person as such. They represent to us the subject of this blessedness in its proper qualifications: wherein, our business is to consider his qualification, *righteousness*, under which notion only, he is concerned in the present discourse; and about which, two things are to be inquired: namely—what it imports, and—how it qualifies.

1. What it imports. I take righteousness here to be opposed to wickedness in the foregoing verse (as was intimated before;) and so understand it in an equal latitude, not of particular, but of universal righteousness. That is, not that particular virtue which inclines men to give every one their right (unless in that every one, you would include also the blessed God himself, the sovereign, common Lord of all) but a universal rectitude of heart and life, comprehending not only equity towards men, but piety towards God also. A conformity to the law in general, in its utmost extent, adequately opposite to sin (which is indeed of larger extent than wickedness; and in what different respects righteousness is commensurate to the one and the other, we shall see by and by) as that is, generally, said to be ανομια, a *transgression of the law.* (1 Joh. 3, 4.) Among moralists,* such a comprehensive notion of righteousness as is inclusive of all other virtues, is not unknown. But in Scripture, it is its much more ordinary acceptation. To give instances, were to suppose too much ignorance in the reader; and to enumerate the passages in which this term is taken in that extensive sense, were too great an unnecessary burden to the writer. It were indeed to transcribe a great part of the Bible. How familiar is the opposition of *righteous* and *wicked*, and *righteous* and *sinner*, in sacred language! And how fully co-extent *righteousness* is, in the Scripture notion of it, to the whole law of God, that one passage sufficiently discovers; where it is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, that they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Luke 1. 5, 6. It is true indeed, that when the words godliness or holiness are in conjunction with this term, its significancy is

* Εν δε δικαιοσυνη συλληβδην πασ αρετ εστι *Righteousness comprises every virtue.*

divided and shared with them, so as that they signify, in that case, conformity to the will of God in the duties of the *first* table, and this is confined to those of the *second*: otherwise, being put alone, it signifies the whole duty of man, as the other expressions also do in the same case, especially the latter of them.

As it seems not to be within the present design of the context to take notice of any imputed wickedness of the opposite sort of persons, other than what was really in them, and whereby they might be fitly characterized: so, I conceive, that imputed righteousness is not here meant, that is inherent in the person of the Mediator; but that which is truly subjected in a child of God, and descriptive of him. Nor must any think it strange, that all the requisites to our salvation, are not found together in one text of Scripture. The righteousness of him, whom we are to adore as made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; hath a much higher sphere peculiar and appropriate to itself. This of which we now speak, in its own inferior and subordinate place, is necessary also to be both had and understood. It must be understood by viewing it in its rule, in conformity whereto it stands; which must needs be some law of God. There hath been a twofold law given by God to mankind, as the measure of a universal righteousness, the one made for innocent, the other for lapsed man; which are distinguished by the apostle under the names of the law of works, and the law of faith. Rom. 3. 27. It can never be possible, that any of the apostate sons of Adam should be denominated righteous by the former of these laws, the righteousness thereof consisting in a perfect and sinless obedience. The latter therefore is the only measure and rule of this righteousness, namely, the law of faith; or that part of the gospel-revelation which contains and discovers our duty, what we are to be and do in order to our blessedness; being, as to the matter of it, the whole moral law, before appertaining to the covenant of works, attempered to the state of fallen sinners, by evangelical mitigations and indulgence, by the super-added precepts of repentance and faith in a Mediator, with all the other duty respecting the Mediator, as such; and clothed with a new form as it is now taken into the constitution of the covenant of grace. This rule, though it be in the whole of it capable of coming under one common notion, as being the standing, obliging law of Christ's mediatory kingdom; yet according to the different matter of it, its obligations and annexed sanctions are different. As to its matter, it must be understood to require:

(1.) The mere being and sincerity of those gracious principles, with their essential acts (as there is opportunity) expressed therein, in opposition to the nullity and insincerity of them.

(2.) All the possible degrees and improvements of such principles and acts, in opposition to any the least failure or defect. In the former respect, it measures the very essence of this righteousness, and enjoins what concerns the being of the righteous man as such. In the latter, it measures all the super-added degrees of this righteousness (which relations, where they have a mutable foundation, admit,) enjoining what concerns the perfection of the righteous man. In the former respect, righteousness is opposed to wickedness, as in that of the Psalmist, I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God—therefore hath the Lord recompenced me according to my righteousness. (ps. 18. 21. 24.) In the latter to sin, with which the apostle makes unrighteousness co-extent, in these words, If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, &c. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Accordingly are its sanctions divers. For wherein it enjoins the former of these, the essence of this righteousness, in opposition to a total absence thereof, it is constitutive of the terms of salvation, and obligeth under the penalty of eternal death. So are faith, repentance, love, subjection, &c. required: If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins, He that believeth not, is condemned already.——The wrath of God abideth on him. (Joh. 8. 24. Chap. 3. 18, 36.)——If ye repent not, ye shall all likewise perish. Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.—— him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins. (Luke 13. 3, 5. Act. 3. 19. c. 5. 31.) If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ. let him be anathema maran-atha. (1 Cor. 16. 22.) He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me, &c. (Matt. 10. 27.) If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, (that is, as the former scripture expounds this, loves them not less than me), he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14.26.)that is while he remains in that temper of mind he now is of, he must needs be wholly unrelated unto me, and uncapable of benefit by me, as well as he is indocible, and not susceptible of my further instructions, neither capable of the precepts or privileges belonging to discipleship. He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him, and will come in flaming fire to take vengeance of those that know not God, and obey not his Gospel; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, &c. Heb. 5. 9. 2 Thes. 1. 8, 9. &c. Where it is only the sincerity of those several requisites, that is under so severe penalty exacted and called

for; inasmuch as he that is sincerely a believer, a penitent, a lover of God or Christ, an obedient subject, is not capable of the contrary denomination, and therefore not liable, according to the tenor of this law, to be punished as an infidel, an impenitent person, an enemy, a rebel.

When it enjoins the latter, namely all the subsequent duty, through the whole course whereof the already sincere soul must be tending towards perfection; though it bind not thereto under pain of damnation, further than as such neglects and miscarriages, may be so gross and continued, as not to consist with sincerity: yet such injunctions are not wholly without penalty; but here it obliges, under less penalties, the hiding of God's face and other paternal severities and castigations. They that thus only offend, are chastened of the Lord, that they may not be condemned with the world. 1Cor.11.32. Their iniquity is visited with the rod, and their transgression with stripes, though loving-kindness be not taken away. Ps. 89.32, 33. Yea, and while they are short of perfect holiness, their blessedness is imperfect also; which is to be acknowledged a very grievous penalty, but unconceivably short of what befalls them that are simply unrighteous. That it obliges thus diversly, is evident; for it doth not adjudge unto eternal death without remedy, for the least defect; for then what other law should relieve against the sentence of this? or wherein were this a relieving law? Yet doth it require perfection, that we perfect holiness in the fear of God; 2Cor.7.1. that we be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. Mat 5. 48. And otherwise, did it bind to no other duty than what it makes simply necessary to salvation; the defects and miscarriages that consist with sincerity, were no sins, not being provided against by any law that is of present obligation (unless we will have the law of nature to stand by itself as a distinct law, both from that of works, and of grace; which is not necessary; but as it did at first belong to the former, so it doth now to the latter, as shall further be shown by and by.) For to suppose the law of works in its own proper form and tenor, to be still obliging, is to suppose all under hopeless condemnation, inasmuch as all have sinned. And besides, it should oblige to cast off all regard to Christ, and to seek blessedness without him; yea, and it should oblige to a natural impossibility, to a contradiction, to make that not to have been, which hath been; a sinner to seek happiness by never having sinned. It cannot therefore entirely, in its own form, as it was at first made and laid upon man, be of present and continuing obligation to him. But in what part and respect it is, or is not; comes now more distinctly to be shown. Here know, the law of nature, with fit addi-

tionals, became one formed constitution; which being violated by the apostacy, became unuseful to the end it was made for, the containing of man within the bounds of such duty as should be conjunct with his blessedness. Therefore was the new constitution of the law of grace made and settled, which alters, adds to, takes from it, relaxes, or re-enforces it, according as the matter of it, the exigency of man's case, and God's gracious purpose and design could admit, and did require. For the *promise* (implied in the threatening) it ceased; sin having disobliged the promiser. For the *precept* the expressed positive part is plainly abrogate. 1 Tim. 4. For the natural part: as it was not necessary, so nor was it possible it should be so; its foundations being more stable than heaven and earth. For the *commination*, we must understand two things in it: first, that for every transgression, a proportionable punishment must become due: secondly, that this debt be in event exacted: or, that God do actually inflict the deserved penalty entirely and fully upon the offending person.

The former of these is in the strictest and most proper sense natural, and therefore also unalterable. This dueness arising immediately from the relation of a reasonable creature offending, to his Maker. Whence also it is discernible to mere natural light. Pagans are said (Rom. 1. 32.) to have known the righteous judgment of God, that they who commit such things (as are there mentioned) are worthy of death. And hence was the mention and dread of a Nemesis, and an εκδικον ομμα *a vindictive Deity, and a revengeful eye* over them so frequent with them. "If therefore (as the learned Grotius speaks) there had never been a penal law; yet a human act, having in itself a pravity, whether intrinsical, from the immutable nature of the thing; or even extrinsical, from the contrary command of God, had deserved punishment, and that very grievous." Now what an arbitrary constitution did not create, it could not nullify; but might add strength, and give a confirmation to it. But now for the latter, that this debt be entirely and fully exacted of the sinner himself; though that be also natural, yet not in the strictest and most proper sense. That is, it is convenient and agreeable to the nature of the thing; not what it doth so necessarily require, that it can upon no terms be dispensed with. It is so natural, as that the son inherit from his father, which yet may, sometimes, for just causes be ordered otherwise. It is what, if it were done, justice could not but approve: not what it doth strictly and indispensably require: or, is a debt which it might exact, but which may, without injustice, upon valuable considerations be remitted. The former of these, therefore, the new constitution doth no way infringe or weaken, but confirm and

reinforce. The latter it so far dispenses with, as that, for the satisfaction made by the Redeemer, the debt incurred by sin, be remitted to the sinner that truly repents and believes, and continues sincerely (though imperfectly) to obey for the future. So that his after-delinquencies, consisting with such sincerity, do not actually, or in event, subject him to other penalties, than the paternal rebukes and chastenings before-mentioned. But this latter part considerable in the commination, the determination of the full penalty, to the very person of the transgressor: it doth not dispense with to others (that is of the adult, and of persons in a present natural possibility of understanding the Law-giver's pleasure herein) than such before described; but says expressly, he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him: (Joh. 3. 36.) That indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, shall be upon every soul of man that doth evil.—Rom. 2. 8. 9.

Therefore the morally preceptive part of the law of works, is not in force as man's rule of duty, considered in conjunction with the promise: that is, it doth not now say to any man, "Do this, that is, perfectly obey without ever having sinned, that thou *may'st live*. Both which he was obliged to eye conjunctly; the former, as containing the *rule*; the other the *end*, in part, of his obedience: but it is in force even by the new constitution itself as God's rule of judgment, considered in conjunction with the commination, upon all whom the law of grace relieves not, as not coming up to the terms of it; whom also this supervening law brings under a supervening aggravated condemnation. For where the obligation to obedience is violated, the obligation to punishment naturally takes place. We see then how far the law of works is in force, and how far not. But that so far as it is in force, it is to be looked on as taken into the new constitution of the law of grace, is evident. For it is, new modified, and hath received a new mould and stamp by this law: which is now become (so far as it is promulgate) the standing rule of government over the lapsed world. The principal modifying act herein, is *dispensation*. Now this, it is true, may be so understood, or may be taken in such a sense, as wherein it will only belong to the executive part of government: that is, when it is not the act of the same power that made the law; as where only the execution of a deserved penalty is dispensed with, which may be done, in some cases, by a Judge that is only a minister of the law, and not the maker of it; being (as may be supposed) enabled thereto by that law itself or by an authority annexed to his office; or by virtue of instructions, which leave to him some latitude of managing the affairs of his judicature in a discretionary way, as present occasions shall dic-

tate. And yet by none of these would any change be made in the law; but this is dispensation in a less proper sense. In the proper and more famous sense, dispensation belongs to the legislative part of government, being the act of the same power that made the former law, now dispensed with; and an act of the same kind, namely legislation; the making of a new law that alters the former which it hath relation to whence it was wont to be reckoned among those things that make a change in a law. And so the case is here. (*Vid. Suerez de Legibus,).* The former law is dispensed with by the making of a new one; which so alters and changes it in its matter and frame, and more immediate end, as hath been shewn: and a changed law is not the same.

Nor is it at all strange, that the minatory part of the law of works related to the preceptive so as with it to constitute the debt of punishment, should be now within the compass of the Redeemer's law. For by this applied, and urged on the consciences of sinners, he performs a necessary preparatory part of his work for their recovery, namely, the awakening, the humbling them; and reducing them to a just and useful despair of relief and help, otherwise than by his merciful hand and vouchsafement; and the rendering them hereby capable of his following applications. Cutting or lancing, with other such severities, are as proper and useful a part of the chirurgeon's business, as the applying of healing medicines: nor have they the same design and end for which wounds are inflicted by an enemy, the taking away of life, but the saving of it. And the matter is out of doubt, that the most rigorous determination of the penalty that shall be understood duly belonging to the least sin, hath a place, and doth stand visibly extant to view in the publicly avowed declaration, and among the placita or decretals of the Redeemer. We there read, that whosoever shall say to his brother, fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire: (Mat. 5. 22.) (yea, and that lower degrees of the same kind of sin, do expose to lower degrees of the same kind of punishment, as our Saviour's words must be understood if we attend the plain meaning of his allusive and borrowed phrase of speech:) That the wages of sin is death: Rom. 6. 23. That as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. Gal. 3. 10. 22. And we are told, that the Scripture (which is the word of Christ, and was written not for innocent, but lapsed man) hath concluded all under sin. Where also we find what is the true intent and end of this rough and sharp dealing with men, the shutting them up, like sentenced malefactors, as in order to execution (which seems to be

the import of the word συνεκλεισεν here used) namely, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe (or to them believing, as the words may be read). And moreover the Spirit, which breathes not in the law of works, as such, but in the law of grace, performs that operation which belongs to it, as it hath the name of the spirit of bondage, by applying and binding on the sentence of death, as due to the guilty person.

Therefore we must understand the Redeemer's Constitution to have two parts. First, An assertion and establishment of the ancient determined penalty due for every transgression; and to be certainly inflicted on all such as accept not the following offer of mercy upon the terms prescribed. Whereby the honour and justice of the Creator is salved and vindicated, in reference to that first covenant made with man. And the case of the sinner is plainly stated before him, that he may have a distinct and right apprehension of it. Secondly, The grant of pardon and eternal life to those that repent unfeignedly of their sins, and turn to God; believing in the Mediator, and resigning themselves to his grace and government, to be by him conducted, and made acceptable to God in their return, and that continue sincere herein to the end. Whereby the wonderful mercy of God in Christ is demonstrated, and the remedy is provided and ascertained to the, otherwise, lost and hopeless sinner. And these two parts therefore are to be looked on in this constitution, though distinctly, yet not separately. The sinner is, at once to consider the same penalty as naturally, and by divine sanction, due to him; but now graciously to be remitted: the same blessedness as justly lost, but mercifully to be restored, with a high improvement. And to own both these jointly, as the voice of the Redeemer in his gospel. Death is due to thee; blessedness forfeited by thy having sinned: but if thou sincerely repent, believe and obey for the future, thou art pardoned, and entitled to everlasting life.

It therefore now appears, that as the law or dictates of pure nature, comprehended together with other fit additionals, became at first one entire constitution aptly suited to the government of man in his innocent state, unto which the title did well agree of the law or covenant of works: so the same natural dictates, transcribed and made express (because now sullied, and not so legible in the corrupted nature of man) do, with such allays and additions as the case required, compose and make up the constitution which bears the title of the law or covenant of grace, or the law of faith, or the gospel of Christ, and is only suitable to the state of man lapsed and fallen; as the measure of that righteousness which he is now to aim at, and aspire un-

to. The rule of this righteousness therefore being evidently the law of faith, the gospel-revelation, wherein it is preceptive of duty: this righteousness can be understood to be nothing but the impress of the gospel upon a man's heart and life: a conformity in spirit and practice to the revelation of the will of God in Jesus Christ; a collection of graces exerting themselves in suitable actions and deportments towards God and man; Christ formed in the soul, or put on; the new creature in its being and operations; the truth learned as it is in Jesus, to the putting off the old man, and the putting on the new. More distinctly, we may yet see wherein it lies, upon a premised view of some few things necessary to be fore-known in order thereunto. As, That this righteousness is a renewing righteousness, or the righteousness of one formerly a sinner, a lapsed perishing wretch, who is by it restored into such a state towards God, as he was in before that lapse (in respect of certain great essentials, though as yet his state be not so perfectly good, while he is in his tendency and motion; and shall, by certain additionals, be unspeakably better, when he hath attained the end and rest he is tending to).

That a reasonable creature, yet untainted with sin, could not but have a temper of mind suitable to such apprehensions as these, namely, That as it was not the author of being to itself, so it ought not principally to study the pleasing and serving of itself, but him who gave it being; that it can no more continue and perfect itself unto blessedness, than it could create itself; and can therefore have no expectation hereof, but from the same author of its being; and hence, that it must respect and eye the great God, its Creator and Maker: as, The sovereign authority whom it was to fear and obey, and the sovereign good whom it was to love and enjoy. But because it can perform no duty to him, without knowing what he will have it to do: nor have any particular expectation of favours from him, without knowing what he will please to bestow; and is therefore obliged to attend to the revelations of his will concerning both these: it is therefore necessary, that he eye him under a notion introductive and subservient to all the operations that are to be exerted towards him, under the two former notions; that is, as the *eternal never-failing truth*, safely to be depended on, as intending nothing of deceit in any the revelations, whether of his righteous will, concerning matter of duty to be done; or of his good will, concerning matter of benefit to be expected and enjoyed:—That man did apostatize and revolt from God, as considered under these several notions; and returns to him, when a holy rectitude is recovered, and he again becomes righteous, considered under the same; That it was not agreeable to God's wisdom, truth,

and legal justice, to treat with man a sinner in order to his recovery, but through a mediator; and that therefore he was pleased in wonderful mercy to constitute and appoint his own Son Jesus Christ, God-man, unto that office and undertaking; that through him, man might return and be reconciled to himself, whom he causelessly forsook; designing that he shall now become so affected towards himself, through the mediator; and firstly therefore towards the Mediator's own person, as he was before, and ought to have been towards himself immediately.

Therefore, whereas God was considerable in relation to man, both in his innocency and apostacy, under that fore-mentioned twofold notion of the supreme authority and goodness; He hath also set up and exalted our Lord Jesus Christ, and represented him to sinners under an answerable two-fold notion of a Prince and a Saviour. That is a mediating Prince and Saviour to give repentance first; to bow and stoop the hearts of sinners, and reduce them to a subject posture again, and then by remission of sins to restore them to favour, and save them from the wrath to come. Him hath the Father clothed with his own authority, and filled with his grace; requiring sinners to submit themselves to his ruling power, and commit themselves to his saving mercy; now both lodged in this his Son: to pay him *immediately* all homage and obedience, and through him *ultimately* to himself; from him *immediately* to expect salvation and blessedness, and through him *ultimately* from himself. That whereas the spirits of men are not to be wrought to this temper, but by the intervention of a discovery and revelation of the divine will to this purpose; our Lord Jesus Christ is further appointed by the Father to reveal all this his counsel to sinners: and is eminently spoken of in Scripture upon this account, under the notion of the *truth;* in which capacity he more effectually recommends to sinners both his *authority* and his grace. So that his threefold (so much celebrated) office of King, Priest, and Prophet, (the distinct parts of his general office as mediator) which he manages in order to the reducement of lost sinners, exactly correspond (if you consider the more eminent acts and properties of each office) to that threefold notion under which the spirit of man must always have eyed and been acted towards God, had he never fallen: and hence this righteousness, which consists in conformity to the gospel, is the former righteousness, which was lost; with such an accession as is necessary, upon consideration that it was lost, and was only to be recovered by a mediator.

Therefore you may now take this short, and as compendious an account as I can give of it, in what follows. It includes so firm and understanding an assent to the truth of the whole gospel re-

velation, as that the soul is thereby brought, through the power of the Holy Ghost; sensibly to apprehend its former disobedience to God, and distance from him, the reasonableness of subjection to him, and desirableness of blessedness in him; the necessity of a Redeemer to reconcile and recover it to God; the accomplishments and designation of the Lord Jesus Christ to that purpose: and hence, a penitent and complacential return to God, as the supreme authority, and sovereign Good, a humble and joyful acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ as its Prince and Saviour, with submission to his authority, and reliance on his grace (the exercise of both which are founded in his blood), looking and pitching upon him, as the only medium, through which he and his duties can please God, or God and his mercies approach him; and through which he hath the confidence to venture upon a covenant-acceptance of God, and surrender of himself to him, afterward pursued to his uttermost, by a continued course of living in his fear and love, in obedience to him, and communion with him through the Mediator, always, while he is passing the time of his pilgrimage in this world, groaning under remaining sin, and pressing after perfect holiness; with an earnest expectation (animating him to a persevering patience through all difficulties) of a blessed eternity in the other world. That such a conformity to the gospel should be expressed by the name of righteousness, cannot seem strange to such as acquaint themselves with the language of the Scripture. That gracious frame which the gospel (made effectual) impresses upon the soul, is the kingdom of God, in the passive notion of it, his kingdom received, and now actually come with power upon our spirits. And this kingdom (sometimes also by an apt synecdoche called judgment in the same notion) is said to consist in righteousness; whence then result also, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom. 14. 17. The same holy impressions and consequent operations are mentioned by the apostle under the name of fruits of righteousness, wherewith he prays his Philippians might be filled. (Phil. 1. 11.) It was Elymas's opposition to the gospel, that stigmatized him with that brand, "Thou enemy of all righteousness." To yield ourselves servants to righteousness, in opposition to a former servitude to sin, is obeying from the heart the doctrine of the gospel, into the type or mould whereof we have been cast or delivered. Rom. 6. 17. And sure, both the seal and the impression, God's revelation, and holiness (however now more explicit and distinctly conspicuous in all their parts) are the same, with us substantially, and in David's time; whence we need make no difficulty to own this latter, when we meet with it, as here, under the same name. By what hath hitherto been said, it may be already seen in part,

how exactly this righteousness corresponds to the blessedness for which it qualifies; whereof we shall have occasion hereafter to take further notice. In the mean time, it will be requisite to shew which was promised to be done in the next place.

Secondly, How it qualifies. To which I say (very briefly) that it qualifies for this blessedness two ways:

1. Legally, or in *genere Morali*, as it describes the persons, who by the gospel-grant have, alone, title thereunto.—The righteous into life eternal. (Mat. 25. 26.)——The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (1. Cor. 6. 9.) Say to the righteous, it shall be well with them. (Isa. 3. 10.) The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him.—In his righteousness he shall live. (Exek18. 23.) In which last words, how this righteousness conduceth to life, is expressed by the same proposition as in the text. In this kind it is not at all causal of this blessedness, but it is that which the free, and wise, and holy Law-giver thought meet, by his settled constitution (besides what necessity there is of it upon another account), to make requisite thereto. The conformity of our Lord Jesus Christ to that severer law, under which he is said to have been made, is that which alone causes, merits, purchases this blessedness; which yet is to be enjoyed, not by all *indiscriminatim*, or without distinction, but by such alone, as come up to the terms of the gospel; as he did fully satisfy the strict exactions of that other rigid law, by doing and suffering for their sakes.

2. Naturally, or in *genere Physico*. In this kind it may be said to be some way causal, that is, to be a *causa materialis dispositiva*, by a proper positive influence, *disposing the subject* unto this blessedness, which that it shall, yet, enjoy, is wholly to be resolved into the divine good pleasure, but it is put by this holy rectitude in that temper and posture that it may enjoy it, through the Lord's gracious vouchsafement; when without it, it were naturally impossible that any should. An unrighteous impure soul, is in a natural indisposition to see God, or be blessed in him. That depraved temper averts it from him, the steady bent of its will is set another way, and it is a contradiction that any (*in sensu composito*) should be happy against their wills, that is while that aversion of will yet remains. The unrighteous banish themselves from God, they shun and hate his presence. Light and darkness cannot have communion. The sun doth but shine, continue to be itself, and the darkness vanishes, and is fled away. When God hath so determined, that only the pure in heart shall see him; that without holiness none shall; he lays no other law upon unholy souls, than what their own impure natures lay upon themselves. If therefore it should be inquired, Why may not the unrighteous be subjects

of this blessedness, see God, and be satisfied with his likeness, as well as the righteous? the question must be so answered, as if it were inquired, Why doth the wood admit the fire to pass upon it, suffer its flames to insinuate themselves till they have introduced its proper form, and turned it into their own likeness: but we see water doth not so, but violently resists its first approaches, and declines all commerce with it? The natures of these agree not. And is not the contrariety here as great. We have then the qualified subjects of this blessedness, and are next to consider this blessedness itself.

CHAP. III.

I. The next thing proposed in the preceding chapter which was *Secondly,* to show the nature of this blessedness, which is considered, in the three ingredients (here mentioned) whereof it consists. 1. Vision of God's face. 2. Assimilation to him. 3. The satisfaction resulting thence. II. These propounded to be considered, *First.* Absolutely and singly each by itself. *Secondly.* Relatively, in their mutual respects to each other. The first of these, Vision of God's face, discoursed of. 1. The Object. 2. The Act.

I. NOW for the nature of this blessedness, or the inquiry wherein it lies, so far as the text gives us any account of it, we are invited to turn our thoughts and discourse to it. And we have it here represented to us in all the particulars that can be supposed to have any nearer interest in the business of blessedness, or to be more intimate and intrinsical thereunto. For (the beatific object supposed) what more can be necessary to actual, complete, formal blessedness, than the sight of it, an adaptation or assimilation to it, (which is nothing else but its being actually communicated and imparted to the soul, its being united and made as it were one with it) and the complacential fruition the soul hath of it so communicated, or having so transformed it into itself?

And these three are manifestly contained in the text (the

beatific object being involved with them) the first in the former clause, "I shall behold thy face;" the second and third in the latter, "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness;" where, being made like to God hath been discovered to be supposed; and the satisfaction, the pleasant contentful relishes consequent thereto, plainly expressed. We shall therefore have stated the entire nature of this blessedness in the handling of these three things; —vision of the face of God:—participation of his likeness, and—satisfaction therein.

II. And I shall choose to consider them absolutely, and singly, each by itself, and relatively, in the mutual respects (by way of influence and dependance) they may be found to have towards each other. Therefore.

First, in the absolute consideration of them severally, we begin with

1. The vision of God's face, where—the object; The face of God, and,—the act of seeing and beholding it, are distinctly to be spoken to.

(1.) The object of this vision, the face of God which is his glory represented, offered to view. And this objected or exhibited glory is twofold:---sensible, such as shall incur and gratify (after the resurrection) the bodily eye, and---intellectual, or intelligible; that spiritual glory that only comes under the view and contemplation of the glorified mind.

[1.] A sensible glory (to begin with what is lower) is fitly in our way to be taken notice of, and may well be comprehended (as its less principal intendment) within the significancy of the expression; the face of God. So indeed it doth evidently signify, Exod. 33. 11. And if we look to the notation of the word, and its frequent use as applied to God, it may commodiously enough, and will often be found to signify, in a larger and more extended sense, any aspect or appearance of God. And though it may be understood (ver. 23.) of that chapter, to signify an overcoming spiritual glory, as the principal thing there intended, such as no soul dwelling in flesh could behold, without rending the vail, and breaking all to pieces; yet, even there also, may such a degree of sensible glory be secondarily intended, as it was not consistent with a state of mortality to be able to bear. And supposing the other expression "Thy likeness;" to signify, in any part, the *objective* glory saints are to behold; it is very capable of being extended so far, as to take in a *sensible* appearance of glory also, which it doth in these words, "The similitude of the Lord shall he behold:" (Numb. 12. 8.) yet even that glory also was transformative and impressive of itself: Moses so long conversed with it, till he became uncapable, for the present, of conversing with men, as you know the story relates. Ezek. 1. 28. Exod. 34, 35, &c.

Such a glory as this, though it belong not to the being of God, yet it may be some umbrage of him, a more shadowy representation, as a man's garments are of the man, which is the allusion in that of the Psalmist, That art clothed with majesty and honour: Thou coverest thyself with *light* as with a garment. Psal. 104. 1, 2, And inasmuch as that spiritual body (the house not made with hands, 2. Cor. 5. 1.) wherewith the blessed are to be clothed upon, must then be understood to have its proper sensitive powers and organs *refined to that degree, as may be agreeable to a state of glory; so must these have their suitable objects to converse with. A faculty without an object, is not possible in nature, and is altogether inconsistent with a state of blessedness. The bodies of saints will be raised in glory, fashioned like Christ's glorious body; must bear the image of the heavenly; (1. Cor 15. 43. Phil. 3. 21.) and this will connaturalize them to a region of glory, render a surrounding, sensible glory necessary and natural to them, their own element: they will, as it were, not be able to live but amidst such a glory. Place is conservative of the body placed in it, by its suitableness there. Indeed every created being (inasmuch as it is not self-sufficient, and is obliged to fetch in continual refreshings from without) must always have somewhat suitable to itself to converse with, or it presently languishes. By such a harmony of actives and passives, the world consists and holds together. The least defect thereof then, is least of all supposable in the state of blessedness. The rays of such a glory have often shone down into this lower world. Such a glory we know shewed itself upon the Mount Sinai: afterwards often about the tabernacle, and in the temple: such a glory appeared at our Saviour's birth, baptism, and transfiguration; and will do at his expected appearance; which leaves it, no unimaginable thing to us, and shews, how facile it is to God to (do that which will then be, in some sort necessary) create a glory meet for the entertainment and gratification of any such faculty, as he shall then continue in being. But,

[2.] The intellectual glory, That which perfected spirits shall eternally please themselves to behold, calls for our more especial consideration. This is the glory that excelleth, hyperbolical glory, as that expression υπερβαλλοντης δοξης (2. Cor. 3. 10.) imports; such, as in comparison whereof, the other is said to be no glory: as the apostle speaks, comparing the glory of the legal with that of the evangelical dispensation, where the former was, we must remember, chiefly a sensible glory, the glory

* Cuilibet potentiæ activæ respondet passiva, sive objectival: *To every active faculty, there corresponds a passive or objective one.*

that shone upon Mount Sinai; the latter a purely spiritual glory; and surely, if the mere preludes of this glory, the *primordia*, the *beginnings* of it, The glory—yet shining but through a glass, (as he there also speaks of his glory) were so hyperbolically glorious, what will it be in its highest exaltation, in its perfected state? The apostle cannot speak of that, but with hpyerbole upon hyperbole in the next chapter. Καθ υπερβολην εις υπερβολην. (2. Cor. 4. 17.) as through he would heap up words as high as heaven to reach it, and give a just account of it. Things are as their next originals. This glory, more immediately rays forth from God, and more nearly represents him. It is his more genuine production. He is stiled the Father of Glory: (Eph. 1. 17.) every thing that is glorious is some way like him, and bears his image. But he is as well the Father of spirits, (Heb. 12. 9.) as the Father of glory; and that glory, which is purely spiritual, hath most in it of his nature and image: as beams but in the next descent from the body of the sun. This is his unvailed face, and emphatically, the divine likeness. Again, things are as the faculties which they are to exercise and satify; this glory must exercise and satisfy, the noblest faculty, of the most noble and excellent creature. Intellectual nature, in the highest improvement it is capable of in a creature, must here be gratified to the uttermost; the most enlarged contemplative power of an immortal spirit finds that wherein it terminates here, with a most contentful acquiescence. It is true it must be understood not totally to exceed the capacity of a creature, but it must fully come up to it. Should it quite transcend the sphere of created nature, and surpass the model of a human understanding (as the divine glory undoubtedly would, did not God consider us in the manner of exhibiting it to our view) it would confound, not satisfy. A creature even in glory is still a creature, and must be treated as such. After the blessed God hath elevated it to the highest pitch, he must infinitely condescend: it cannot otherwise know or converse with him. He must accommodate his glory to the weaker eye, the fainter and more languid apprehensions of a poor finite thing. I had almost said nothing, for what is any creature, yea, the whole creation in its best state, compared with the *I AM*, the being (as he justly appropriates to himself that name) the All in All. We must be careful then to settle in our own thoughts such a state of this glory (in forming that indeterminate notion we have now of it) as may render it (though confessedly above the measure of our present understandings as to a distinct knowledge of it) not manifestly incompetent to any created understanding whatsoever, and as may speak us duly shy of ascribing a deity to a worm, of affixing any thing to the creature, which shall be found agree-

ing to the blessed God himself alone. Their expressions therefore who over-magnify (even deify) the creature assumed into glory, must be heard and read with caution and abhorrency, as the high-swelling words of blasphemous vanity. Is it not e-

Not being willing to trouble a discourse wholly of another nature and design with any thing of controversy. I have chosen only to annex a marginal digression, wherein, somewhat to animadvert upon the over-bold disputes and definitions of the scholastic generation, touching what we have now under consideration. Some of whose writings seem the very springs of the putid conceits (there not wanting those, that are officious enough to serve the illiterate, in accommodating things of that kind to their genius and language) so greedily imbibed by modern enthusiasts.

It is a question much agitated among the School-men. Whether the divine essence be exhibited to the view of the blessed in heaven, in itself immediately, or by the intervention of any created likeness or similitude? Had it been agreed to forbear looking within this vail (the rude attempt whereof, rather rents than draws it aside) and to shut up all discourse of this kind, in a modest awful silence; or had the adventures some have made been foolish only, not pernicious, this present labour had been spared. But when men speak of things above their reach, not to no purpose barely, but to very bad; what they say ought to be considered. The divine essence, say the Thomists (and the Scotists here disagree not) is itself immediately united to the intellect of the blessed in *ratione Speciei intelligibilis, in respect of the intelligible species.* So as there is no place for any intervening likeness, or representation. *Ipsa Divina Essentia est, quæ videtur & quo videtur: the divine essence itself is that which is seen and in which he is seen. Thom. Sum. prima parte, q.* 12 *Art.* 2. 3. *contr. Gentes c* 15. *Thomas's Sermons first part against the pagans.* Now they assert concerning the *species intelligibilis*, in general, that they have not *Locum objecti, intellectionem terminantes: the place of the object terminating the act of the intellect.* (which they make the place and office of the *verbum mentis per intellectionem productum: the word produced by the intellectual act of the mind.* but *formæ tantum & actus primi: but only of the form and the primary act.* And that the understanding so acts by them, as fire by its proper form, *Thom. Sum. prima parte, q.* 8. 5. *Art.* 2. (the contrary whereto is asserted by Scotus in 1. Sentent. distinct. 3. q. 6.) Yea, and *Cajet.* affirms 1. p. q. 76. *Art.* 2. That the intellect and the intelligible species are more one than the matter and form in the *compositum*, For, saith he, (or to that purpose. not having him now at hand) the matter is not turned into the form, nor *e contra*, but the intellect, which is in itself mere power, doth, in *genere intelligibili* turn into its very intelligible object: and the intelligible object itself is after a certain manner imbibed in the intellect. So *Ledesma de Divin. perfect. q.* 3. *Art.* 5. *unum tranfit in aliud, ex quo*

nough that perishing wretches, that were within one hand's breadth of hell, are saved, except they be also deified too? that they become happy, unless they also become gods? The distance even of a glorified creature from the glorious God, is still infinitely greater, than between it and the silliest worm, the minutest atom of dust.

And by how much more we shall then know of his glory, so much more shall we understand that distance. Yet as he shall then enlarge, the capacity of the soul he glorifies, to a very vast

sequitur, quod unum sit aliud; that one passes into the other, whence it follows, that one becomes another. And hence say they, applying this doctrine to the present purpose, *et secundum istum modum, in conjunctione illa ineffabili divinæ essentiæ cum intellectu creato, fit unum agens integrum scil. intellectus creatus factus Deus mirebili modo Intellectus in visione beatifica, est potentia jam deificata, per lumen gloriæ: and according to this mode in that ineffable conjunction of the divine essence with a created intellect there is formed one entire agent, that is, a created intellect is in a wonderful manner made God. The intellect in the beatific vision, is a power made like to that of God himself by the light of glory. Cajet prima parte, the first part* (q. 12. Art. *ex Ledes. q.* 8. Art. 8.) For besides this immediate union of the divine essence itself with the intellect they assert a *lumen gloriæ, light of glory*, an accident superadded, without which the vision cannot be performed; which additional the Scotists reject. Some, though they admit it, think the vision may be without it, and that it doth not *implicare contradictionem, visionem beatificam fieri sine lumine gloriæ, cum solo speciebi Dei auxilio, quod item asserunt multi ex scholasticis: imply a contradiction that the beatific vision should be found without the light of glory, solely by the special aid of God, which also many of the school-men assert. Palud. in 4. dist* 49. *q.* 1. *Art.* 3. *Concl.* 2. *Thom. de Argent. q. Art.* 1. *Major. q.* 4. *Hen. quotibet.* 7. *Zumel.* 1. *p. q.* 12. *Art.* 5. *disp,* 2. *concel,* 3. *Ita Onuphr de virtute pœnitentia.* Whether there be any *verbum creatum*, the product of intellection, the Thomists are themselves divided. Their more common opinion is, that there is none, as *Ledesma* assures us; telling us also his reason, why he conceives there can be none. *Beati non formant verbum in videndo Deo, sed plus vident quam verbo creato dicere possunt——nam beatus per visionem beatam quamvis non videat infinite videt tamen infinitum——the blessed in the vision of God do not form to themselves a word (or representation) but they see more than can be expressed by a created word—for he who is blessed with the beatific vision though he cannot see infinitely, yet sees an infinite object.* (which is their great argument against any intelligible species), and he further adds, *sicut visio Dei, quæ est in ipso Deo, habet pro principio & specie intelligibili ipsam divinam Essentiam; & pro*

comprehension, so shall the exhibition of his glory to it, be fully adequate to its most enlarged capacity. They are as yet but obscure glimmerings, we can have of this glory; but so far as, without too bold curiosity, we may, and wherein Scripture-light will give us any pre-apprehension of it, let us consider a while,

termino ipsam Divinam Essentiam; sic visio beatorum est ita supernatutalis, et divini ordinis, et participatio divinae visionis ita perfecta ut ipsa etiam habeat pro principio et specie intelligibili, ipsam divinam Essentiam, et pro termino sive verbo producto, ipsammet divinam Essentiam: as the vision of God which is in God himself has for its principle and its intelligible species the divine essence itself, and the same for its term, so the vision of the blessed is of so supernatural and divine an order, and so perfect a participation of the divine vision, that it likewise has the divine essence for its principle and intelligible species, as well as for its term or created word. So that the principle and term of this vision are owned to be nothing else but the simple divine essence. Concerning the formal act itself, it is much disputed, whether the creature's intellect do at all effectually concur to it, or whether God himself be not the only efficient or agent in this vision. Some stick not to affirm the latter, *Marsil. in 3. q. 1. Palud. in 4. dist. 49. q. 1.* Art. 3. (*referente Ledesma*) and say plainly, that the action of the inferior agent wholly ceases, and the superior only acts: the same thing that D. M. Causabon in his enthusiasm charges one Maximus with, who in a book entitled κεφαλαια θεολογικα, *theological principles*, writes thus: την αμεσον λαβων ενωσιν προς τον θεον ο νους την τε νοειν και νοεισθαι παντελως δυναμιν εχει σχολαζουσαν. *That the soul taken into immediate union with God, loses all its knowing power:* (though this be not distinctively spoken of the state of glory:) and what doth this amount to? but that while they are eagerly contending about the saints' blessedness, and too curiously labouring to explicate the manner of their seeing God, they unawares destroy the subject of the question, and deny that they see him at all; and so upon the whole, dispute themselves into a worse than Paganish infidelity. And even the rest, that agree in the sense of the passages, above-recited, will not be easily able to avoid the charge of as intolerable consequences; which it is my business here only to discover, and not to determine any thing in this controversy, while I tax the too much boldness of others, who adventure it. And here not to insist on the absurdity of what they say concerning the intelligible species in general, let it be considered. 1. That the divine essence is said to be united to the intellect of the blessed, as an intelligible species. 2. That the intelligible species, in the business of intellection, and the intellect, become one another; do not remain distinct things united, but are identified. 3. That hence in understanding God, the intellect is deified and becomes God, which naturally follows from the two former, and is moreover expressly asserted in

the nature and the excellency of it. We cannot indeed consider these separately; for we can no sooner understand it to be glory, than we conceive it excellent: glory, in the proper notion of it, being nothing else but resplendent excellency, the lustre of excellency, or real worth made conspicuous. Yet as there is an excellency conceivable in the nature if it, that excellency whereof it is the splendour and brightness; so we must conceive a peculiar excellency of that very radiation, that splendour itself, wherewith it shines unto blessed souls. In its very nature it is the brightness of divine excellencies: in its present appearance,

plain words. What need is there to press this doctrine with hard consequences? or how can it look worse than it doth already, with its own natural face? Nor can I apprehend which way it should be made look better. For should it lay claim to that favour, to be understood according to the usual sense of the peripatetic maxim, *intellectus, intelligendo, sit omnia; the intellect by the act of understanding becomes all things;* it will be found manifestly to have precluded itself. That maxim is wont to be understood thus; That the intellect becomes that which it understands representative, by putting on the species or likeness of its object, the representation of it. For instance, when I form in my mind the notion of a mountain my understanding becomes an ideal or spiritual mountain; it becomes that species (which is liable to more exception too than I shall now insist on, and looks more like the language of a poet than a philosopher) that is now formed there: and not the material mountain itself. But how shall this assertion, The understanding, by its act of understanding God, becomes God, be capable of that interpretation, that is, It becomes his likeness, his idea, his representation now formed in it, when any such intervening likeness or representation is utterly denied; and that supposed species is said to be the simple, divine essence itself? and if the divine essence itself be that species by which it is understood, will it not follow from that other *Aristotelian axiom* (which with them must signify as much as a text from saint Paul) *scibile et scientia sunt idem: knowledge and the object of knowledge are the same thing*: That our very knowledge of God must be God too; or would they disown that maxim, sure when once the faculty is supposed deified, the act immanent in it, cannot be a created accident; nor can that maxim (understood of the *scibile representatinum*, or the species *sibilis*) be denied by them. And sure, if the saints' knowledge of God, the likeness of him in their minds be God; their holiness, the likeness of him in their hearts, must be so too. How absurd then would it be, to use that Scripture-language, and speak of these under the names of God's image or likeness when *similitude* and *identity*, are notions so vastly disagreeing; and since a saint's knowledge and holiness here and in heaven differ but in degree: they can be here on earth, nothing but God dwelling in them. And supposing that Scotus have better defended

it shines in the highest excellency of that brightness; in its nature it excelleth all things else: in its present exhibition, compared with all its former radiations, it excelleth itself.

As to the *nature* of this glory, it is nothing else but the conspicuous lustre of divine perfections. We can only guide our present conceptions of it, by the discovery God hath already given us of himself, in those several excellencies of his being, the great attributes that are convertible and one with him. When Moses besought him for a sight of his glory, he answers him with this "I will proclaim my name before thee." His name, we know, is the collection of his attributes. The no-

than his adversaries impugned the real identity of the soul and its faculties, that must be deified too. However, what could be imagined more absurd, than that the substance of the soul should be a creature, and its faculty God? whence then do we think that modern familists have fetched their admired nonsense? Whom have they had their original instructors? or who have taught them that brave magnificent language of being Godded with God, and Christed with Christ? but these? More sure need they blush to be found guilty of so profoundly learned inconsistencies, or to speak absurdly after such patrons. And what should occasion these men so to involve themselves, I cannot find or divine, more than this, that they were not able to fasten upon any more tolerable sense of the word Καθως 1. Cor. 13. 12. 1. John. 3. 2. but taking that in its highest pitch of significancy; all their arguments are generally levelled at this mark, to prove that no created species can possibly represent God *sicuti est* and thence infer, that he cannot be seen by any created species in the glorified state, where he is to be seen *sicuti est*. But could we content ourselves with a modest interpretation of these words, and understand them to speak not of a *parity*, but of a similitude only, between God's knowledge and ours, nor of an absolute omnimodous similitude, but comparative only; that is, that comparing our future with our present state, the former shall so far excel this, that in comparison thereof, it may be said to be a knowing of God, as we are known, and as he is; insomuch as our future knowledge of him, shall approach so unspeakably nearer to his most perfect knowledge of us, and the truth of the thing, than our present knowledge doth or can; by such an interpretation we are cast upon no such difficulties. For admit that no species can represent God as he is, in the highest sense of these words; yet sure, in the same sense wherein he can be seen by us as he is, he may be represented to us as he is. And what can be more frivolous than that fore-recited reasoning to the contrary? "There can be no created representation of God (*sicuti est*) adequate to the vision the blessed have of him; but they see more than any created representation can contain; for they see *infinitum* though not *infinite*. For how must we understand the *infinitum* they are said to see? Materially, or formally? Must we understand by it him

tion therefore we can hence form of this glory, is only such as we may have of a large volume by a brief synopsis or table; of a magnificent fabric, by a small model or platform; a spacious country, by a little landscape. He hath here given us a true representation of himself, not a full: such as will secure our apprehensions, being guided thereby, from error, not from ignorance. So as they swerve not in apprehending this glory, though they still fall short. We can now apply our minds to contemplate the several perfections which the blessed God assumes to himself, and whereby he describes to us his own being; and can in our thoughts attribute them all to him, though we have still but low defective conceptions of each one. As if we could

that is infinite only, or as he is infinite? If it be said the latter, that is to say, they see *infinite* too: If the former only; Do not saints on earth see (namely mentally, which is the vision we are speaking of) him who is infinite, in their present state, where it is acknowledged the knowledge is by species.

Yet would I not hence conclude, that the knowledge saints shall have of God hereafter, shall be by species; for my design in all this it but to discover the vanity of too positive and definitive conceptions concerning it, beyond the measure of God's revelation, and the ducture of clear and unentangled reason. All knowledge hath been thought to be by assimilation, that is by receiving the species or images of the things known. So the intellect is not really turned into the things which it understands, but only receives their species, wherewith it is united so closely, that it is therefore said to be like to them. Virtuosi of France, confer. 65.

One way or other it hath been judged necessary the mind should be furnished with such images of the thing it is said to understand; which therefore some have thought *connate*; others, supplied by sense totally; others, by a separate *intellectus agens;* which some have thought to be God himself: others, one common intelligence: others, a particular genius. So indispensably necessary it hath been reckoned unto intellection, that the office of furnishing the mind with the images of the things to be understood, should be performed by one or other. If any clearer explication can be given, or better way assigned of the soul's knowing things, it cannot but be welcome to rational men. But I see no necessity or reason it should have a specifically distinct way of knowing here and in heaven. Much less that we should imagine to ourselves such a one, as to that other state, as is altogether unaccountable and capable of no rational explication; and reckon it much more becoming to be silent, than on pretence of any mysteriousness in the things we discourse of, to talk absurdly and unintelligibly about them. A confessed ignorance in this case is becoming, to say with that great apostle, it doth not appear what we shall be: but to conclude and define such matters, is surely φρονειν παρ ο δει φρονειν: *to be wise above what we ought.*

at a distance distinguish the streets and houses of a great city; but every one appears to us much less than it is. We can apprehend somewhat of whatsoever he reveals to be in himself; yet when all is done, how little a portion do we take up of him! Our thoughts are empty and languid, straight and narrow, such as diminish and limit the Holy One. Yet so far as our apprehensions can correspond to the discovery he affords us of his several excellencies, we have a present view of the divine glory. Do but strictly and distinctly survey the many perfections comprehended in his name, then gather them up, and consider how glorious he is! Conceive one glory resulting from substantial wisdom, goodness, power, truth, justice, holiness, that is, beaming forth from him who is all these by his very essence, necessarily, originally, infinitely, eternally, with whatsoever else is truly a perfection. This is the glory blessed souls shall behold for ever.

For the *excellency* of it, it is called by way of discrimination, "The excellent glory." 2. Pet. 1. 17. There was glory put upon Christ in the transfiguration; of which, when the apostle speaks, having occasion to mention withal the glory of heaven itself, from whence the voice came; he adds to this latter, the distinguishing note of the excellent. He himself was eye-witness of the honour, and majesty, and glory, which the Lord Jesus then received; but beyond all this, the glory from whence the voice came, was the excellent or stately glory, as the word Μεγαλοπρεπους imports. It is a great intimation how *excellent* a glory this is, that it is said to be a glory yet to be revealed; (1. Pet. 4. 13.) as if it had been said, whatever appearances of the divine glories are now offered to your view, there is still somewhat undiscovered, somewhat behind the curtain that will outshine all. You have not seen so much, but you are still to expect unspeakably more. Glory is then to shine in its noon-day strength and vigour: it is then in its meridian. Here, the riches of glory are to be displayed, certain treasures of glory, the plenitude and magnificence of glory. We are here to see him as he is; to know him as we are known of him. Certainly, the display of himself, the rays of his discovered excellency, must hold proportion with that *vision*, and be therefore exceeding glorious. It is the glory Christ had with the Father before the foundations of the world were laid; (John 1. 5.) into the vision and communion whereof holy souls shall now be taken, according as their capacities can admit; that wherewithal his great atchievements and high merits shall be rewarded eternally; that wherewith he is to be glorified in heaven, in compensation of having glorified his Father on earth, and finished the work whereto he was appointed. This cannot but be a most transcen-

dent glory. It is in sum, and in the language of the text the glory of God's own face, his most aspectable, conspicuous glory. Whose transforming beams are productive of the glory impressed, the next ingredient into this blessedness, which will presently come to be spoken of, after we have given you some short account of,

(2.) The act of beholding: the vision or intuition itself, by which intervening the impression is made. Glory seems to carry in it a peculiar respect to the visive power (whether corporeal or mental, as it is itself of the one kind or the other); it is something to be contemplated, to be looked upon. And being to transmit an impression, and consequent pleasure to another subject, it must necessarily be so, it can neither transform nor satisfy but as it is beheld. And here the sensitive intuition I shall not insist on, as being less intended in the text, and the discourse of it less suitable to such as with a spiritual mind and design set themselves to inquire into the nature of the saints' blessedness. Yet, as this is the most noble, comprehensive, quick, and sprightly sense, so is the *act* of it more considerable, in the matter of blessedness, than any other of the outward man, and the most perfect imitation of the act of the mind; whence also this so often borrows the name of the other, and is called seeing. It is an act indeed very proper and pertinent to a state of glory. By how much more any sensible object is glorious (supposing the *sensorium* to be duly disposed and fortified, as must be here supposed), so much is it the fitter object of sight; hence when we would express a glorious object, we call it conspicuous; and the less glorious, or more obscure any thing is, the less visible it is, and the nearer it approaches to invisibility; whence that saying in the common philosophy, "To see blackness is to see nothing." *Atist. in* 3. *Mencorolog Cap. de Iride.* Whatsoever a glorified eye, replenished with a heavenly vitality and vigour, can fetch in from the many glorified objects that encompass it, we must suppose to concur to this blessedness. Now is the eye satisfied with seeing, which before never could.

But, it is intellectual sight we are chiefly to consider here, that, whereby we see him that is invisible, and approach the inaccessible light. The word חזה here used, some critics tell us, more usually signifies the sight of the mind. And then, not a casual, superficial glancing at a thing, but contemplation, a studious, designed viewing of a thing when we solemnly compose and apply ourselves thereto; or the vision of prophets, or such as have things discovered to them by divine revelation, (thence called *chozim, seers*) which imports (though not a previous design, yet) no less intention of mind in the act itself. And so it more fitly expresses that knowledge which we have,

not by discourse and reasoning out of one thing from another, but by immediate intuition of what is nakedly, and at once offered to our view, which is the more proper knowledge of the blessed in heaven. They shall have the glory of God so presented, and their minds so enlarged, as to comprehend much at one view; in which respect they may be said, in a great degree, to know as they are known, inasmuch as the blessed God comprehends all things at once, in one simple act of knowing. Yet that is not to be understood as if the state of glory should exclude all ratiocination, more than our present state doth all intuition, (for first and indemonstrable principles we see by their own light, without illation or argument); nor can it be inconvenient to admit, that while the knowledge the blessed have of God is not infinite, there may be use of their discursive faculty with great fruit and pleasure. Pure intuition of God, without any mixture of reasoning, is acknowledged (by such as are apt enough to be over-ascribing to the creature) peculiar to God alone. But as the blessed God shall continually afford (if we may speak of continuity in eternity, which yet we cannot otherwise apprehend) a clear discovery of himself, so shall the principal exercise, and felicity of the blessed soul consist in that less laborious and more pleasant way of knowing, a mere admitting or entertaining of those free beams of voluntary light, by a grateful intuition; which way of knowing, the expression of sight, or beholding, doth most incline to and that is, we are sure, the ordinary language of Scripture about this matter. (Matt. 5. 8. 12. 14.) *Cognoscere Deum clare et intuitive est proprium et naturale soli Deo, sicut est proprium igni calefacere et soli illuminare: to know God clearly and intuitively is peculiar and natural to God alone; as it is peculiar to fire to give warmth and to the sun to give light. Ledesm. de divin. perfect. q.* 8. *Art.* 7.

CHAP. IV.

I. Having considered the 1. ingredient of this blessedness, "Vision of God's face," we pass on to the next, that is, 2, Assimilation to God, or his glory impressed. Wherein it consists, discovered in sundry propositions. II. The last ingredient, which is 3, The satisfaction and pleasure which results, stated and opened.

I. AND now, upon this vision of the blessed face of God next follows, in the order of discourse,

2. The soul's perfect assimilation unto that revealed glory, or its participation thereof (touching the order the things themselves have to one another, there will be consideration had in its proper place) and this also must be considered as a distinct and necessary ingredient into the state of blessedness we are treating of. Distinct it is, for though the vision now spoken of, doth include a certain kind of assimilation in it, as all vision doth, being only a reception of the species or likeness of the object seen: this assimilation we are to speak of, is of a very different kind. *That*, is such as affects only the visive or cognitive power, and that not with a real change, but intentional only, nor for longer continuance than the act of seeing lasts; but *this*, is real total, and permanent. And surely it is of equal necessity to the soul's blessedness, to partake the glory of God, as to behold it; as well to have the divine likeness impressed upon it, as represented to it. After so contagious and over-spreading a depravation as sin hath diffused through all its powers, it can never be happy without a change of its very crasis and temper throughout. A diseased, ulcerous body would take little felicity in gay and glorious sights: no more would all the glory of heaven signify to a sick, deformed, self-loathing soul.

It must therefore be all glorious within, have the divine nature more perfectly communicated, the likeness of God transfused and wrought into it. This is the blessed work begun in regeneration; but how far it is from being perfected, we may soon find by considering, how far short we are of being satisfied in our present state, even in the contemplation of the highest and

most excellent objects. How tasteless to our souls are the thoughts of God! How little pleasure do we take in viewing over his glorious attributes! the most acknowledged and adorable excellencies of his being! And whereunto can we impute it but to this, that our spirits are not yet sufficiently connaturalized to them? Their likeness is not enough deeply instamped on our souls. Nor will this be, till we awake. When we see better, we shall become better: when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. But do we indeed pretend to such an expectation? Can we think what God is, and what we are in our present state, and not confess these words to carry with them an amazing sound, "we shall be like him!" How great a hope is this! How strange an errand hath the gospel into the world! How admirable a design! to transform men and make them like God! Were the dust of the earth turned into stars in the firmament! were the most stupendous, poetical transformations assured realities; what could equal the greatness and the wonder of this mighty change! Yea, and doth not the expectation of it seem as presumptuous, as the issue itself would be strange; is it not an over-bold desire; too daring a thought; a thing unlawful to be affected, as it seems impossible to be attained? It must be acknowledged there is an appearance of high arrogance in aspiring to this, to be like God. And the very wish or thought of being so, in all respects, were not to be entertained without horror. It is a matter therefore that requires some disquisition and explication, wherein that impressed likeness of God consists, which must concur to the saints' blessedness. In order hereunto then take the following propositions:

(1.) There is a sense wherein to be like God is altogether impossible, and the very desire of it the most horrid wickedness. The prophet in the name of God charges the proud prince of Tyre with this, as an inexpiable arrogance that he did set his heart as the heart of God, and upon this score challenges and enters the list with him: Come, you that would fain be taken for a God, I will make a sorry God of thee before I have done; Because thou hast set thy heart as the heart of God, I will set those upon thee, that shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and that shall defile thy brightness; And what! Wilt thou yet say in the hand of him that slayeth thee, I am a God? Thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee;—I have spoken it saith the Lord God. Ezek. 28. 6—10. He will endure no such imitation of him, as to be rivaled in the point of his Godhead. This is the matter of his jealousy; "They have moved me to jealousy with not-God," (Deut. 32. 21.) so it is shortly and more smartly spoken in the original text. And

see how he displays his threats and terrors hereupon in the following verses. This was the design and inducement of the first transgression, to be as gods. And indeed all sin may be reduced hither. What else is sin (in the most comprehensive notion) but an undue imitation of God? an exalting of the creature's will into a supremacy, and opposing it as such to the divine? To sin, is to take upon us, as if we were supreme, and that there were no Lord over us; it is to assume to ourselves a deity, as if we were under no law or rule; as he is not under any, but what he is to himself. Herein, to be like God, is the very core and malignity of sin.

(2.) There is a just and laudable imitation of God, a likeness to him, that is matter of command, praise and promise, as wherein both the duty, excellency and blessedness of the reasonable creature doth consist; and which is in some respect inseparable from the nature of man. We are required to be followers of God, as dear children, (Eph. 1. 5. μιμηται) imitators the word is. David is commended as a man after God's own heart; though but now, we saw in another, with what disdain and indignation it was resented, that he did set his heart, as the heart; of God. The new creature, the new man, the first fruits, as he is called, the flower of the creation, is made after God. Jam. 1. 18. Eph. 4. 24. Saints expect, upon the assurance of his word, to be more fully like him, as we see in the text, and parallel places. Yea, man was made at first with a concreate similitude to God, which we know was the counsel of heaven, and the result and issue of that counsel, Gen. 1. 26, 27. This is evident enough in itself, and needs no more words. But to make a further step in this business, observe next,

(3.) There can be no allowable imitation of any one, but with an exception, as to some peculiarities that may belong to his special station, relation, and other circumstances of the condition in which he is; or with limitation to such things as are of common concernment unto both.* It is commonly observed, how naturally a people form their manners and fashions to the example of the prince; and there is no well-disposed ruler, but would take it well, to be imitated in things that are of common concernment to him and his subjects, that is, that concern him, not as he is a king, but as he is a man, or a christian. To behold the transforming power of his own example; where it is such as begets a fair and unreproachful impress†; how his vir-

*Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis; the whole nation is conformed to the example of the king.

† Nam facere rectè bonus princeps faciendo docet. Cumque sic im-

tues circulate (his justice, temperance, ove of religion,) and produce their likeness among his people; it will be a glory, and cannot but be resented with some delight. We cast an honour upon them whom we imitate: for we acknowledge an excellency in them (which is all that honouring imports in the first notion of it,) and that naturally is received with pleasure. But now, should subjects aspire to a likeness to their prince, in the proper appendages and acts of sovereignty; and because he is a glorious king, they will be such too; and assume the peculiar cognizances of regalty; ascend the throne, sway the sceptre, wear the crown, enact laws, &c. There cannot be more of dutifulness and observance in the former imitation, than there is of disloyalty and treason in this. A father is pleased, to have his son imitate him, within such limits before-mentioned; but, if he will govern the family, and fill up his room in all relations, this will never be endured.

(4) There are some things to be found in the blessed God, not so incommunicable and appropriate, but that his creatures may be said to have some participation thereof with him: and so far, to be truly like him. This participation cannot be univocal; as the nature of a living creature in general, is equal in men and brutes; so, it is a self-evident principle, that *inter Deum et creaturam nihil est commune, nothing can be common to God and an inferior being.* Nor is it only an equivocal, a participation of the same name, when the natures signified thereby are altogether diverse: but analogical, in as much as the things spoken, under the same names, of God and the creature, have a real likeness, and conveniency in nature with one another: and they are in God, primarily; in the creature, by dependance, and derivation: in him, essentially, as being his very essence; in them, but as accidents, (many of them) adventitious to their beings; and so while they cannot be said to be the same things in them, as in him, are fitly said to be his likeness.

(5.) This likeness, as it is principally found in man, among all the terrestrial creatures; so hath it, in man, for its seat and subject, his soul or spiritual part. The effects of divine wisdom, power, goodness, are every-where visible, throughout the whole creation; and as there is no effect, but hath something in it, corresponding to its cause (wherein it was its cause;) so, every creature doth, some way or other, represent God.

perio maximus, exemplo major est: for a good prince teaches virtue by his own practice. And thus while he is supreme in authority, he is superior in example. Velleius Paterculus, Rom. Hist. 1. 2.

Some in virtues, some in life, some in being *only. The material world represents him, as a house does the builder; but spiritual beings, as a child does the father, τυ γαρ γενος εσμεν, *for we are his offspring.* Other creatures (as one, *P. Molineus de cognitione Dei,* fitly expresses it) carry his footsteps; these, his image; and that, not as drawn with a pencil, which can only express figure and colour; but as represented in a glass, which imitates action and motion. To give the pre-eminence therefore, ‡in this point to the body of man, was a conceit so gross, that one would wonder how it should obtain; at least in the Christian world.

Yet we find it expressly charged by St. Augustine upon the anthropomorphites of old (or melitonians, as he calls them, from one Melito the father of them) not only, that they imagined God in a human shape (which was their known conceit) but that they stated God's image in man, in his body, not his

‡ Multis enim modis dici res possunt similes Deo; aliæ secundùm virtutem, & sapientiam, factæ; quia in ipso est virtus & sapientia non facta; aliæ in quantum solùm vivunt, qui ille summe & primò vivit; aliæ in quantum sunt, quia ille summé ? et primitus est. For there are many respects in which creatures may be said to be like God: some with regard to virtue and wisdom, inasmuch as there are in him, virtue and wisdom uncreated; others merely from their possession or share of life, whereas he possesses life in the highest and first sense; others in being only, but he is the highest and first of beings. Aug: 80 quest. q. (nibi) 211.

* Heathens have disdained and declaimed against so unworthy thoughts of God. Το δε θειον αυτο αορατον εφθαλμοις, αρρητον φωνη, αναφες σαρκι, &c. *the divine essence itself is not to be seen by the eye, uttered by the voice, shewn in the flesh,* &c. Maximus Tyr. Dissert. 1. The same author warns us to take heed, that we ascribe to God, Μητε μεγεσθος, μητε χρωμα, μητε χρημα, μητε αλλο τι υλης παθος, *neither size, nor colour, nor form, nor any other property of matter.* Ibid.

Unto which purpose is that decantate distich of Homer, Ου γαρ εστον, &c. And that saying of Pliny, *Quapropter effigiem Dei formamque quærere; imbecillitatis humanæ reor,* applied by Zanc. *de operibus Dei. Wherefore I think it a proof of human weakness to seek after any image or form of God.* And we may see much of like import alleged by Natal. Com. lib. 1. p. 13. Which (by the way) discovers how flatly opposite the idolatry, forbidden in the second commandment, is to the light of nature itself. Which hath been also the just apology of the ancient patrons of the Christian cause, for the simplicity of their worship in this respect; and their not imitating the pompous vanity of pagan image-worship. Ουδε θειας εικονας υπολαμβανομεν ειναι τα αγαλματα, ατε μορφην αορατυ θευ και ασωματυ μη διαγραφουσες, &c. *we do not esteem images of God*

soul.* Nor are Van Helmont's fancies, about corporeal likeness, capable of excuse by any thing, but that they were a dream (as they are fitly stiled) and not likely to impose upon the waking reason of any man.

(6.) This image or likeness of God in the spirit of man, representing what is communicable in him, is either natural or moral. There is first, a natural image of God, in the soul of man, which is inseparable from it; and which it can never divest itself of.‖ Its very spiritual, immortal nature itself, is a representation of his. Its intellective and elective powers are the image of what we are constrained to conceive under the notion of the same powers in him. Yea, the same understanding with the memory and will, in one soul, are thought a lively resemblance of the †triune Deity. But there is further a similitude of him in respect of moral‡ virtues or perfections answering to what we conceive in him, under that notion: his wisdom (so far as it hath the nature of a moral virtue) his mercy, truth, righteousness, holiness, &c. These two kinds or parts (as they may be called) of the divine impress upon the spirits of men, are distinguished by some (I see not how properly) by the distinct names of image, denoting the former; and similitude the latter: answering, as is thought, to two Hebrew words צלם דמות. (Zanc.) of the like import: but the things themselves are evidently enough distinct, namely, what perfects the nature of man *in genere physico*, as he is such a particular being in the universe: and what perfects him, *in genere morali*, as he is considerable in reference to a law or rule guiding him to blessedness, as his end.

to be proper ornaments, because we cannot delineate the form of the invisible and spiritual Deity. Origen contr. Celsum. lib. 7.

To which purpose see at large, Min. Felix, Quod simulacrum Deo fingam? &c. what image shall I make for God?

And surely it is as improveable against the same piece of Christian paganism. The usually assigned differences would easily be shewn to be trifling impertinencies.

* Corpus hominis non animum esse imaginen Dei: not the soul but the body of man is the image of God. Aug. (if it be Augustines) lib. de hæresibus. See Dr. Charleton of his image of God in man.

‖ Est Dei similitudo quædam, quam nemo vivens, nisi cum vita exuit: quam habet homo et volens, et nolens, &c. there is a certain likeness of God which no man living divests himself of, but with life, which every man has whether willing or not. Bernard, de vita Solitar.

† D. Aug. (fuse) lib. 10. de Trinitat.

‡ Sed est alia, magis Deo propinqua, similitudo, quæ in virtutibus consistit: but there is another more intimate resemblance to God which consists in virtue. Bernard.

(7.) It is a likeness to God in respect of those moral excellencies or perfections, that is especially considerable by us, in reference to our present purpose; as more immediately relating to the soul's blessedness in God. By the former it hath a potentiality, by the latter an habitude in reference thereunto. Or (to use terms, more liable to common apprehension) by the former it hath a remoter capacity, by the latter a present fitness; or, as the apostle expresses it, is made meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, that is, considering this likeness as begun in the soul.

(8.) Besides what is thus (in the sense before expressed communicable between God and man, there are some things so peculiarly appropriate to God, as that, in respect of them, there can be no formal likeness in the creature: and it would be impious boldness to aspire thereto. Many things of this kind might be mentioned; I shall only instance in two, wherein there is a manifest competition of the apostate world with him; and which are therefore more relative to practice; his sovereign authority, and his independency. In these while men affect to imitate, they wickedly affront him. And here is the great controversy between the glorious God, and the degenerous children of men. Every man would catch at a Godhead, and either assume it to himself, or cast it, many times, upon other creatures viler and more ignoble than himself; snatch the reins of government out of God's hand; and exalt their own wills into an absoluteness, as liable to controul from none: place and settle their dependance on their own wit, power, fortitude, industry; or, if that be a more hopeless course (for they often find an entire Godhead too much for one creature, and are therefore constrained to parcel it out among many) place their confidences and expectations in something else without them: do often, that ridiculous thing, so worthy to be hooted at, make the congested dirt of the earth their trust, (the righteous shall laugh at him, and say, Lo! this is the man that trusted in riches. Psal. 52. 6. 73.); their wealth their strong tower; which only the name of the Lord is to his righteous ones. Yet, all the while, self is the centre and end in which all must meet and terminate. This at last carries away the assumed fictitious deity. And this thing, that is thus now made like God, is an idol (which indeed signifies so much) and this imitation of him, wicked idolatry; than which nothing more debases a reasonable soul, or divests man of himself, that till they redress this, they give no proof of their being men. Isa. 46. 8. This assimilation of ourselves to God is very remote then from being a perfection; it is a most reproachful deformity: as we know imitations, if they be visibly affected, and strained too far, are always thought ridiculous by wise men.

(9.) Though, in respect of these incommunicable things, there cannot be a proper, formal, immediate similitude to God: yet, there ought to be a correspondency; which must be measured and estimated by the consideration of his state, and ours; whence it will appear, that what so properly appertains to him, and what ought to correspond thereto in us, do agree to each, upon one and the same intervening reason.

For instance, is he absolutely supreme in as much as he is the first Being? the correspondent impression with us, and upon the same reason, must be a most profound, humble self-subjection, disposing our souls to constant obedience to him. Again, is he simply independent; as being self-sufficient and all in all? the impression with us must be a nothingness, and self-emptiness, engaging us to quit ourselves, and live in him. This is the only conformity to God, which with respect to his incommunicable excellencies, our creature-state can admit. It may be also stiled a likeness to him, being a real conformity to his will concerning us, and his very nature as it respects us. We may conceive of it, as of the likeness between a seal, and the stamp made by it; especially, supposing the inequality of parts in the seal to be by the protuberancy of what must form the signature. In that case there would be a likeness, *aliquatenus*, that is, an exact correspondency: but what would then be convex or bulging out in the seal, would be, as we know, concave or hollow in the impression. Such is the proportion between sovereignty and subjection, between self-fulness and self-emptiness. Whereas a similitude to God, in respect of his communicable perfections, is as that, between the face and its picture; where no such difference is wont to appear.

(10.) Assimilation, or conformity to God, in both these respects, composes that excellent frame of moral perfections, which the divine glory, beheld, impresses upon the soul; and which immediately conduces to its satisfaction and blessedness. I say, moral perfection, because that only is capable of being impressed by the intervening ministry of our own understanding; namely, by its vision, intimated, as was formerly observed, in that of the apostle, "We shall be like—for we shall see him," &c. Its natural perfections are antecedent and presupposed, therefore not so fitly to be understood here. And I say, both these ways; for, as we cannot form an entire idea of God, without taking in, together, his perfections of both sorts, communicable, and incommunicable, (the former whereof must serve instead of a genus; the latter of a *differentia*, in composing the notion of God, (Thes. Salmu. de Deo immenso:) so nor will his impress on us be entire, without something in it respecting both; in the senses already given. What it will contribute to

future blessedness, we shall shortly see, in its place, when we have made a brief inquiry (which is the next thing, according to our order proposed) concerning.

3. The satisfaction that shall hence accrue. Where it will not be besides our purpose, to take some notice of the significancy of the word שבע, which some think to be the Niphal of the same word notwithstanding the different punctuation of the ש. And not to insist on its affinity to the word used for swearing, or rather, being sworn, (which; an oath being the end of controversies, and beyond which we go no further, nor expect more, in way of testifying; would, the more fitly here represent to us the soul in its non-ultra: having attained the end of all its motions, and contentions,) its equal nearness to the word signifying the number of seven, is not altogether unworthy observation. That number is, we know, often used in Scripture, as denoting plenitude and perfection; and God hath, as it were signalized it, by his rest on the seventh day: * and if this were not designedly pointed at here in the present use of this word, (as it must be acknowledged to be frequently used where we have no reason to think it is with such an intendment) it may yet occasion us to look upon the holy soul now entered into the eternal sabbath † the rest of God: which, (secluding all respect to that circumstance) is, yet, the very substance and true notion of the thing itself (to the consideration whereof I now pass) under the word held forth to us. For this *satisfaction*, is the soul's rest in God; its perfect enjoyment of the most perfect good: the expletion of the whole capacity of its will; the total filling up of that vast enlarged appetite; the perfecting of all its desires in delight and joy. Now delight or joy (for they differ not, save that the latter word is thought something more appropriate to reasonable nature) is fitly defined *Quies appetitus in appetibili: the rest of the desiring faculty in the thing desired.* (Abuin. Sum.) Desire and delight, are but two acts of love, di-

* How fit a Symbol it is of God's sabbatic rest, see Dr. More's defence of his Philosphical Cabbala from Philo. Judœus.

† Erit ibi verè maximum Sabbatum, non habens vesperam, quod commendavit Dominus in primis operibus mundi; ut legitur, et requievit die Septimo---Dies enim Septimus etiam nos ipsi erimus, quando ipsus fuerimus benedictionum et sanctificationum pleni atque referti; ibi vacabimus et videbimus, videbimus et amabimus, amabimus, laudabimus, &c. There shall be in reality a great sabbath having no evening, which God distinguished at the very creation of the world; as it is written "and he rested on the seventh day?" For the seventh day shall be ever with us, when we shall be completely filled with blessings and graces. There we shall rest and contemplate; contemplate and love; love and praise. Aug. de civit Dei lib: 22. c. 38, vid cund de civit Dei l. 17, c. 4.

versified, only by the distance, or presence of the same object: which, when it is distant, the soul, acted and prompted by love, desires, moves towards it, pursues it; when present and attained, delights in it, enjoys it, stays upon it, satisfies itself in it, according to the measure of goodness it finds there. Desire, is therefore, love in motion: delight, is love in rest. And of this latter, delight or joy, Scripture evidently gives us this notion, he will rejoice over thee with joy, (unto which is presently added as exegetical,) he will rest in his love: (Zeph. 3. 17.) which resting can be but the same thing with being satisfied. This *satisfaction* then is nothing else but the repose and rest of the soul amidst infinite delights: its peaceful acquiescence, having attained the ultimate term of all its motions, beyond which it cares to go no further: the solace it finds in an adequate, full good; which it accounts enough for it, and beyond which, it desires no more; reckons its state as good as it can be, and is void of all hovering thoughts, (which perfect rest must needs exclude,) or inclination to change.

And so doth this being satisfied, not only generally signify the soul to be at rest; but it specifies that rest; and gives us a distinct account of the nature of it. As, that it is not a forced, violent rest; such as proceeds from a beguiled ignorance, a drowsy sloth, a languishing weakness, or a desire and hope of happiness, by often frustrations baffled into despair, (to all which, the native import and propriety of that word satisfaction doth strongly repugn.) But it discovers it to be a natural rest: I mean, from an internal principle. The soul is not held in its present state of enjoyment by a strong and violent hand; but rests in it by a connaturalness thereunto: is attempered to it, by its own inward constitution and frame. It rests not as a descending stone, intercepted by something by the way, that holds and stops it; else it would fall further: but as a thing would rest in its own centre; with such a rest as the earth is supposed to have in its proper place; that, being hung upon nothing, is yet unmoved *ponderibus librata suis, equally balanced by its own weight every way.*

It is a *rational, judicious* rest; upon certain knowledge that its present state is simply best, and not capable of being changed for a better. The soul cannot be held under a perpetual cheat, so as always to be satisfied with a shadow. It may be so befooled for a while, but if it remain satisfied, in a state that never admits of change; that state must be such, as commends itself to the most thoroughly informed reason and judgment. It is hence a *free, voluntary, chosen* rest: such as God professes his own to be in Zion; this is my rest, here will I dwell, for I have desired it. Psal. 123. 14. It is a *complacential* rest, where-

in the soul abides steady, bound only by the cords of love; a rest in the midst of pleasantness; בנעימים Psal. 16. 6. The Lord is my portion, the lots are fallen to me in *amœnitatibus*; it cannot be more fitly expressed than *amidst pleasantnesses*: and this speaks not only what the Psalmist's condition was, but the sense, and account he had of it. That temper of mind gives us some idea of that contentful, satisfied abode with God, which the blessed shall have. He intimates, how undesirous he was of any change. Their sorrows (he told us above) should be multiplied that hasten after another God. (Ver. 4.) Hereafter there will be infinitely less appearance of reason for any such thought. Now, it is the sense of a holy soul, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none I desire on earth besides thee": as if he said, Heaven and earth yield not a tempting object, to divert me from thee: it is now so, at sometimes, when faith and love are in their triumph and exaltation (but the Lord knows how seldom!) but much more when we see him as he is, and are satisfied with his likeness! It is an *active, vigorous* rest. Action about the end, shall be perpetuated here, though action towards it, ceases. It is the rest of an awakened, not of a drowsy, sluggish soul; of a soul satisfied, by heavenly sensations and fruitions: not uncapable of them; or that hath its powers bound up by a stupifying sleep. It is the rest of *hope*, perfected in fruition, not lost in despair; of satisfied, not defeated expectation. *Despair may occasion rest to a man's body, but not to his mind; or a cessation from further endeavours, when they are constantly found vain, but not from trouble and disquiet; it may suspend from action, but never satisfy. This satisfaction therefore speaks both the reality and nature of the soul's rest in glory: that it rests; and with what kind of rest.

* I think it not worth the while to engage in the dispute (so much agitated between the Thomists and Scotists) whether blessedness do formally consist in this satisfying fruition, or in the antecedent vision: this satisfaction is certainly inseparable from it, and I see not how to be excluded out of its formal notion: it is not vision, as vision; but as satisfying, that makes us happy; and to talk of the satisfaction or pleasure which the understanding hath in knowing is insipid: while the soul understanding, that is, the mind, knows it is the soul enjoying, that is, the will, is pleased and finds content: and till the soul be fully contented, it is not blessed, and it is, by being so, when it saith, "Now am I fully satisfied, I have enough, I desire no more."

CHAP. V.

I. The three ingredients of this blessedness having been considered absolutely, we come—*Secondly*. To their relative consideration; where it is propounded to shew particularly: 1. What relation vision hath to assimilation. 2. What both these have to satisfaction. The relation between the two former, inquired into. An entrance upon the much larger discourse, what relation and influence the two former have towards the third: What vision of God's face or glory, contributes towards satisfaction, estimated from the consideration, 1. Of the object, the glory to be beheld; as it is divine, entire, permanent, appropriate.

I. THUS far have we viewed the parts or necessary concurrence, of which the blessedness of the saints must be composed absolutely and severally each from other: we proceed,

Secondly. To consider them relatively, namely, in the mutual respects they bear one to another; as they actually compose this blessed state. Wherein we shall shew particularly: the relation, by way of influence, and dependance, between *vision*, and *assimilation*: and—Between both these and the *satisfaction*, that ensues: which latter I intend more to dwell upon; and only to touch the former, as a more speculative and less improveable subject of discourse, in my way to this.

1. It may be considered—What relation there may be between vision of God, and assimilation, or being made like to him; and it must be acknowledged (according to what is commonly observed of the mutual action of the understanding and will) that the sight of God, and likeness to him, do mutually contribute each towards other. The sight of God assimilates, makes the soul like unto him; that likeness more disposes it for a continued renewed vision. It could never have attained the beatifical vision of God, had it not been prepared thereto, by a gradual previous likeness to him.* For righteousness (which we

* Which necessity of a likeness to God to dispose for the vision of him, is excellently expressed by a platonic philosopher. The divine

have shewn qualifies for this blessedness) consists in a likeness to God; and it could never have been so prepared, had not some knowledge of God introduced that conformity and yielding bent of heart towards him. For the entire frame of the new man, made after the image of God, is renewed in knowledge. Col. 3. 10. But as, notwithstanding the circular action of the understanding and will upon one another, there must be a beginning of this course somewhere, and the understanding is usually reckoned the ηγεμονικον, *the first mover*, the leading faculty: so, notwithstanding the mutual influence of these two upon each other, seeing hath a natural precedency, and must lead the way unto being like; which is sufficiently intimated in the text, "I shall behold thy face," and then "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness"; and more fully in that parallel scripture: "We shall be like him, for we shall see him," &c. From whence also, and from the very nature of the thing, we may fitly state the relation of the first of these to the second, to be that of a cause to its effect: sight begets likeness, is antecedent to it, and productive of it. That is, the face or glory of God seen; that glory in conjunction with our vision of it: for the vision operates not, but according to the efficaciousness of the thing seen; nor can that glory have any such operation, but by the intervention of vision. It is therefore the glory of God seen, as seen, that assimilates, and impresses its likeness upon the beholding soul: and so its causality is that of an objective cause (which whether it belong to the efficient or final, I shall not here dispute) that operates only as it is apprehended: so introducing its own form, and similitude into the subject it works upon. Such a kind of cause were Jacob's streaked rods of the production that ensued; and such a cause is any thing whatever, that begets an impression upon an apprehensive subject, by the mediation and ministry, whether of the fancy or understanding. This kind of causalty the word hath in its renewing, transforming work; and the sacraments, wherein they are causal of real physical mutations on the subjects of them. So much of the image of God as is here impressed upon souls by gospel-dispensations, so much is impressed of his glory. The work of grace is glory begun. And now, as glory initial, and progressive in this life enters at the eye—(beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are

nature, the το θειον, which he saith, is liable to no sense, μονῳ δε τῳ της ψυχης καλλιςῳ και καθαρωτατῳ, και νοερωτατῳ, και κυφοτατῳ, και περιβυτατῳ, οραλον δι ομοιοτητα, &c. *is yet visible, to that in the soul which is most beautiful, most pure, most perspicuous, most sublime, most noble, in respect of a certain similitude and cognation that is between them.* Max. Tyr.

changed, 2. Cor. 3. 18.) so doth perfect and consummate glory in the other life. For we have no reason to imagine to ourselves any alteration in the natural order the powers of the soul have towards each other, by its passing into a state of glory.

The *object* seen, is unspeakably efficacious; the *act* of intuition is full of lively vigour; the *subject* was prepared, and in a disposition before; and what should hinder, but this glorious effect should immediately ensue? as the sun no sooner puts up his head above the hemisphere, but all the vast space, whither it can diffuse its beams, is presently transformed into its likeness and turned into a region of light. What more can be wanting to cause all the darkness of atheism, carnality, and everything of sin, for ever to vanish out of the awaking soul; and an entire frame of holiness to succeed: but one such transforming sight of the face of God? One sight of his glorious majesty presently subdues, and works it to a full subjection: one sight of his purity makes it pure; one sight of his loveliness turns it into love; and such a sight always remaining, the impress remains always actually (besides that it is in itself most habitual and permanent in the souls now confirmed state) fresh and lively.

The *object* hath quite another aspect upon a wicked soul, when it awakes; and the *act* of seeing is of another kind; therefore no such *effect* follows. Besides, the *subject* is otherwise disposed, and therefore as the sun enlightens not the inward parts of an impervious dung-hill, but it enlightens air; so the sight of God transforms and assimilates at last, not a wicked, but it doth a godly soul. That which here makes the greatest difference, in the temper of the subject, is love. I look upon the face of a stranger and it moves me not; but upon a friend and his face presently transforms mine into a lively cheerful aspect. As iron sharpens iron, so doth the face of a man his friend; (Prov. 27. 17.) puts a sharpness and a quickness into his looks. The soul that loves God, opens itself to him, admits his influences and impressions, is easily moulded and wrought to his will, yields to the transforming power of his appearing glory. There is no resistant principle remaining, when the love of God is perfected in it; and so overcoming is the first sight of his glory upon the awaking soul, that it perfects it, and so his likeness, both at once. But enmity fortifies the soul against him, as with bars and doors; averts it from him; carries with it a horrid, guilty consciousness; which fills it with eternal despair and rage, and inwraps it in the blackness of darkness for ever.

2. Both the *vision* of God, and *likeness* to him, must be considered in their relation to the consequent *satisfaction*, and the influence they have in order thereto. I say both; for though this sa-

tisfaction be not expressly and directly referred by the letter of the text, to the sight of God's face; yet its relation thereto, in the nature of the thing, is sufficiently apprehensible and obvious: both mediate, in respect of the influence it hath towards the satisfying assimilation; and immediate, (which we are now to consider,) as it is so highly pleasurable in itself; and is plainly enough intimated in the text: being applied, in the same breath, to a thing so immediately and intimately conjunct with this vision, as, we find it is. Moreover, supposing, that likeness here, do (as it hath been granted it may) signify objective glory, also as well as subjective, and repeat what is contained in the former expression, "the face of God," the reference satisfaction hath to this vision, (which the re-mention of its object, though under a varied form of expression, supposes) will be more express: therefore we shall shew—what the vision of the divine glory contributes to the satisfaction of the blessed soul, and what felicity it must needs take herein: which cannot but be very great, whether we respect—the glory seen, the object of this vision: or—the act of vision, or, intuition itself.

(1.) The object, the glory beheld. What a spring of pleasure is here? What rivers of pleasures flow hence? In thy presence (saith the Psalmist) is fulness of joy: at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. Psal. 16. 11. The awaking soul, having now passed the path of life, (drawn through Sheol itself, the state of deadly-head,) appears immediately in this presence; and, what makes this presence so joyous, but the pleasant brightness of this face? To be in the presence of any one, and before his face, in conspectu, are equivalent expressions: therefore the apostle quoting this passage, renders it thus, Thou hast filled me with gladness, by thy (countenance;) now in this glorious presence, or within view of the face of God, is fulness of joy, that is, joy unto satisfaction. And the apostle Jude speaking of this presence under this name (a presence of glory) tells us of an exceeding joy, *αγαλλιασις* a jubilation (an *αγαλλιασις*) that shall attend the presentment of saints there. The holy soul now enters the divine Shechinah, the chamber of presence of the great king, the habitation of his holiness and glory, the place where his honour dwelleth. ver. 24. Here his glory surrounds it with encircling beams; it is beset with glory, therefore surely also filled with joy. When the vail is drawn aside; or we are within the vail; in that very presence whither Jesus the forerunner is for us entered (through that path of life,) O the satisfying overcoming pleasure of this sight! Now that, is

* Act: 2. 28. which indeed is the Seventies' reading of the Psalmist's words.

to us revealed, or unvailed glory, which was hidden before. Here the glory set in majesty (as the expression is, concerning the glory of the temple Ezek. 7. 20.) is presented to view openly and without umbrage. God is now no longer seen through an obscuring medium. They are not now shadowed glimmerings, transient, oblique glances, but the direct beams of full-eyed glory that shine upon us. The discovery of this glory is the ultimate product of that infinite wisdom and love, that have been working from eternity, and for so many thousand years, through all the successions of time, towards the heirs of salvation. The last and complete issue of the great achievements, sharp conflicts, glorious victories, high merits of our mighty Redeemer. All these end in the opening of heaven (the laying of this glory as it were common) to all believers. This is the upshot, and close of that great design: will it not think ye be a satisfying glory! The full blessedness of the redeemed, is the Redeemer's reward. He cannot be satisfied in seeing his seed, if they should be unsatisfied. He cannot behold them with content if his heart tell him not, that he hath done well enough for them. God would even be ashamed (Heb. 11. 16.) to be called their God; had he not made provision for their entertainment worthy of a God. It is the season of Christ's triumphs and saints are to enter into his joy. It is the appointed jubilee, at the finishing of all God's works from the creation of the world, when he shall purposely shew himself in his most adorable majesty, and when Christ shall appear in his own likeness (he appeared in another likeness before; surely glory must be in its exaltation in that day. But take a more distinct account, how grateful a sight this glory will be, in these following particulars.

[1.] It is the divine glory. Let your hearts dwell a little upon this consideration. It is the glory of God, that is the glory which the blessed God both enjoys and affords, which he contemplates in himself, and which rays from him to his saints; it is the felicity of the divine Being. It satisfies a Deity, will it not a worm? It is a glory that results and shines from him; and in that sense also divine (which here I mainly intend;) the beauty of his own face, the lustre of divine perfections; every attribute bears a part, all concur to make up this glory. And here pretermitting those which are less liable to our apprehension; his eternity, immensity, simplicity, &c. (of which, not having their like in us, we are the more uncapable to form distinct conceptions, and consequently of perceiving the pleasure, that we may hereafter upon the removal of other impediments, find in the contemplation of them, let us bethink ourselves, how admirable and ravishing the glory will be,

First. Of his unsearchable wisdom, which hath glory pecu-

liarly annexed and properly belonging to it. Glory is as it were, by inheritance, due to wisdom. The wise shall inherit glory. Prov. 3. 35. And here now, the blessed souls behold it in its first seat, and therefore in its prime glory: wisdom, counsel, understanding, are said to be with him; as if no where else. Job 12. 13. Twice we have the apostle describing glory to God, under the notion of only wise; (Rom. 16. 27. 1 Tim. 1. 17.) which is but an acknowledging him glorious in this respect. Wisdom, we know is the proper and most connatural glory of intellectual nature: whether as it relates to speculation, when we call it knowledge; or action, when it is prudence. How pleasant will the contemplation be, of the divine wisdom, in that former notion! When in that glass, that *speculum æternitatis, mirror of eternity*, we shall have the lively view of all that truth, the knowledge whereof can be any way possible and grateful to our natures; and in his light, see light! When all those vast treasures of wisdom and knowledge, (Col. 2. 3.) which already by their alliance to Christ, saints are interested in shall lie open to us! When the tree of knowledge shall be without enclosure; and the most voluptuous epicurism, in reference to it, be innocent! Where there shall neither be lust, nor forbidden fruit; no withholding of desirable knowledge, nor affectation of undesirable! When the pleasure of speculation shall be without the toil; and that maxim be eternally antiquated, that increased knowledge increases sorrow! As to the other notion of it; how can it be less grateful to behold the wisdom that made, and governed the world; that compassed so great designs: and this, no longer in its effects, but in itself? Those works were honourable and glorious, sought of all them that have pleasure in them. What will be the glory of their cause? It would gratify some men's curiosity to behold the unusual motion of some rare *automaton;* but an ingenious person would, with much more pleasure, pry into the secret springs of that motion; and observe its inward frame and parts, and their dependance, and order to each other. It is comely to behold the exterior economy of a well-governed people; when great affairs are, by orderly conduct, brought to happy issues; but to have been at the helm; to have seen the pertinent, proper application of such and such maxims to the incident cases; to have known all the reasons of state; heard debates; observed, with what great sagacity, inconveniencies have been foreseen, and with what diligence prevented: would much more gratify an inquiring genius. When the records of eternity shall be exposed to view; all the counsels and results of that profound wisdom looked into; how will it transport! when it shall be discerned, Lo! thus were the designs laid here; were the apt

junctures, and admirable dependencies of things; which when acted upon the stage of the world, seemed so perplexed and cross, so full of mysterious intricacy? If St. Paul were so ravished at those more obscure appearances of divine wisdom, which we find him admiring, (Rom. 11. 33.) O the depths, &c. what satisfaction will it yield, to have a perfect model, of the deep thoughts and counsels of God, presented to open view! How is the happiness of Solomon's servants magnified, that had the privilege continually to stand before him, and hear his wisdom! But this happiness will be proportionably greater, as Solomon's God is greater than he.

Secondly. The glory of his power will add comeliness to the object of this vision. Power duly placed and allayed is lovely. Beauty consists much in a symmetry or proportion of parts. So must there be a concurrence of divine perfections, to compose and make up the beautiful complexion of his face; to give us a right aspect, the true idea of God, and here his power hath a necessary ingrediency. How incoherent, and disagreeing with itself, were the notion of an impotent God? His power κρατος της δοξης gives lively strokes to his glory. It is called glorious power or the power of glory: (Col. 1. 11.) yea, it is simply called glory itself; (Rom. 6. 4.) the apostle tells us Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, when it is plain he means power. And the same apostle prays on the behalf of the Ephesians, that God would grant them according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might, &c. chap. 3. 16. How frequently are power and glory ascribed to him in conjunction? intimating that, as he is powerful, he is glorious. And certainly, even this glory, cannot but cast a grateful aspect upon the blessed soul, and be infinitely pleasant to behold. What triumphs doth it now raise in gracious spirits, to behold the exertions of it in his works; to read its descriptions in his word; while as yet he holds back the face of his throne, (Job. 26. 9.) while the countenance of enthroned majesty cannot be seen; when so little a portion is heard of him, and the thunder of his power (ver. 14.) so little understood! The infinitely fainter rays of this power in a creature; power in that unspeakable diminution and abatement; that derived, precarious power, when it is innocently used, is observed with pleasure. Here is power in the throne, power in its chief and highest seat; essential, and self-originated power; the root and fountain, the very element of power; power in its proper situation, in its native place to which it belongs. God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God. Ps. 62. 11. Power to God it is in the hebrew. It languishes in a creature, as in an alien subject. If I speak of strength; Lo he is strong in power(saith Job.ch.26)

it as though he had said "Created power is not worth the speaking of; here is the power that deserves the name, that is so indeed." How satisfying a pleasure will this afford, to contemplate this radical power? this all-creating, all-ruling power, the principle of all action, motion and life, throughout the whole creation? This will be as natural a pleasure, as the child takes in the mother's bosom, and in embracing the womb that bare it. How grateful to behold, whence the vast frame of nature sprang! what stretched out the heavens, established the earth, sustained all things! what turned the mighty wheels of providence, throughout all the successions of time! what ordered and changed times and seasons; chained up devils restrained the outrages of a tumultuous world, preserved God's little flock! especially, what gave being to the new creation, (The exceeding greatness of power that wrought in them that believed, &c. Eph. 1. 19, 20.) what made hearts love God, embrace a Saviour! what it was that overcame their own, and made them a willing people in that memorable day! Psal. 110. 3. How delightful a contemplation to think, with so enlarged an understanding, of the possible effects of this power; and so far as a creature can range into affinity, to view innumerable creations, in the creative power of God! And yet how pleasant to think, not only of the extents, but of the restraints of this power; and how, when none could limit, it became ordinate, and did limit itself; that, since it could do so much, it did no more; turned not sooner a degenerous world into flames: withheld itself from premature revenge, that had abortived the womb of love, and cut off all the hopes of this blessed eternity that is now attained! *Posse et nolle nobile : to possess power and to forbear its exercise is noble.* This also speaks the greatness of power: let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, the Lord is gracious, long-suffering, &c. Numb. 14. 17, 18. This was his mightiest power, whereby he overcame himself: *Fortior est qui se, &c. he is stronger who governs himself, &c.*

Thirdly. And what do we think of the ravishing aspects of of his love! when it shall, now, be open-faced, and have laid aside its vail! when his amiable smiles shall be checkered with no intermingled frowns; the light of that pleasing countenance be obscured by no intervening cloud! when goodness, which is love issuing into benefaction, or doing good: grace, which adds freeness unto goodness; mercy, which is grace towards the miserable; shall conspire in their distinct, and variegated appearances to set off each other, and enhance the pleasure of the admiring soul! when the wonted doubts shall all cease, and the difficulty vanish, of reconciling (once necessary) fatherly seve-

rity with love! when the full sense, shall be unfolded to the life, of that description of the divine nature, "God is love:" and the soul be no longer put to read the love of God in his name (as Moses was when the sight of his face could not yet be obtained;) shall not need to spell it by letters and syllables; but behold it in his very nature itself, and see how intimately essential it is to the divine Being! how glorious will this appearance of God be, (we now, hear something of the glory of his grace Eph. 1. 6.) and how satisfying the tuition of that glory! Now is the proper season for the full exercise and discovery of love. This day hath been long expected, and lo, now it is dawned upon the awakening soul: it is now called forth; its senses unbound; all its powers inspirited, on purpose, for love-visions and enjoyments; it is now to take its fill of loves. The apostle's extatical prayer is now answered to the highest degree possible with respect to such a one. Eph. 3. 16. 17. 18. 19. He is now, according to the riches of divine glory, strengthened with might, by the Spirit, in the inner man--to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; to know that love that passeth knowledge &c. He shall now no longer stand amazed, spending his guesses, what manner of love this should be; and expecting fuller discoveries, further effects of it, that did not yet appear: but sees the utmost, all that his soul can bear, or wish to see. He hath now traced home the rivulets to their fountain, the beams to the very sun of love. He hath got the prospect, at last, into that heart, where the great thoughts of love were lodged from everlasting; where all its counsels and designs were formed. He sees what made God become a man; what clothed a Deity with human flesh; what made eternity become the birth of time (when come to its parturient fulness; Gal. 4. 4.) what moved the heart of the Son of God to pitch his tabernacle among men; what engaged him to the enterprize of redeeming sinners; what moved him so earnestly to contest with a perishing world, led him at last to the cross, made him content to become a sacrifice to God, a spectacle to angels and men, in a bitter reproachful death, inflicted by the sacrilegious hands of those whom he was all this while designing to save. The amazed soul now sees into the bottom of this design; understands why itself was not made a prey to divine revenge: whence it was, that it perished not in its enmity against God; that he was not provoked by the obstinacy of its disobedience, and malice of its unbelief, beyond the possibility of an atonement; why he so long suffered its injurious neglects of him, and unkind repulses of a merciful Saviour; and persuaded, till at last he overcome, made the averse heart yield, the careless disaffected soul cry out, "Where is my God?"

Now a Christ or I perish? All this is now resolved into love: and the adoring soul sees how well the effects agree to their cause, and are owned by it. Nothing but heaven itself that gives the sense, can give the notion of this pleasure.

Fourthly. Nor will the glory of holiness be less resplendent; that great attribute which even in a remote descent from its original, is frequently mentioned with the adjunct of beauties. Psal. 110. 3. &c. What loveliness will those beauties add to this blessed face! Not here to insist (which is besides my purpose) upon the various notions of holiness: real holiness Scripture states in purity, (2. Cor. 7. 1.) an alienation from sin; it is set in opposition to all filthiness, to all moral impurity: and in that notion it best agrees to God; and comprehends his righteousness and veracity, and indeed, whatever we can conceive in him, under the notion of a moral excellency. This may therefore be stiled a transcendental attribute, that as it were runs through the rest, and casts a glory upon every one: it is an attribute of attributes. Those are fit predications, holy power, holy truth, holy love, &c. And so it is the very lustre, and glory of his other perfections; he is glorious in holiness. Exod. 15. 11. Hence in matters of greatest moment, he is sometimes, brought in swearing by his holiness, Psal. 89. 35. Amos. 14. (which he is not wont to do by any one single attribute,) as though it was an *adæquatior conceptus a fuller expression* of himself, than any of the rest.

What is of so great an account with him, will not be of least account with his holy ones, when they appear in his glorious presence. Their own holiness is a conformity to his; the likeness of it. And as their beholding it, forms them into that likeness; so that likeness makes them capable of beholding it with pleasure. Divine holiness doth now, more ravish than affright. This hath been the language of sinful dust, Who can stand before this holy God? (1. Sam. 6.) when holiness hath appeared armed with terrors, guarded with flames, and the divine majesty been represented as a consuming fire. Such apprehensions sin and guilt naturally beget: the sinners of Sion were afraid. But so far as the new man is put on, created after God, and they, who were darkness, are made light in the Lord, he is not under any notion more acceptable to them, than as he is the holy one. They love his law, because holy: and love each other, because holy: and hate themselves, because they are no more so. Holiness hath still a pleasing aspect when they find it in an ordinance, meet it in a sabbath: every glimpse of it is lovely. But with what triumphs hath the holiness of God himself been celebrated even by saints on earth? Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holiness! There is none holy as the Lord, for there

is none besides thee. Sing unto the Lord, all ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. Exod. 15. 11. 1. Sam. 2. 2. Psal. 30. 4.—97. 12. What thoughts will they have of it, *when their eyes can behold that glory; when they immediately look on the archetypal holiness, of which their own is but the image; and can view that glorious pattern, they were so long in framing to? How joyfully will they then fall in with the rest of the heavenly host; and join in the same adoration and praise, in the same acclamatn, and triumphant Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabbaoth! How unconceivable is the pleasure of this sight; when the αυτο καλον, the first pulchritude, the original beauty offers itself to view! Holiness is intellectual beauty; divine holiness is the most perfect and the measure of all other: and what is the pleasure and satisfaction, of which we speak, but the perfection and rest of love? Now love, as love, respects and connotes, a pulchritude in its object. Max. Tyr. dissert. 11. And then the most perfect pulchritude, the ineffable, and immortal pulchritude, that cannot be declared by words, or seen with eyes, (they are a heathen's, expressions concerning it,) how can it but perfectly, and eternally please and satisfy? Ibid.

And we are told by the great Pagan theologue,‡ in what state we can have the felicity of that spectacle. Not in our present state; when we have, indeed, but obscure representations, of such things as are, with souls of highest excellency: But when we are associated to the ευδαιμονι χορω *blessed quire:* when we are delivered from the body, (which we now carry about, οσρεα τροπον, *as the oyster doth its shell.* When we are no longer sensible of the evils of time. When we wholly apply ourselves to that blessed vision; are admitted to the beholding of the simple permanent sights; and behold them, being ourselves pure, in the pure light: then have we the view of the

* Si ergo pulchritudo divina nondum visa, sed solum credita et seperata, tantum ignem desiderii excitat: Quid faciet cum, remoto velo, ut est in se conspicitur? Omnino id faciet ut torrente voluptatis illius inebriati, neque velimus, neque possimus, vel ad punctum temporis, oculos ab ea divertere: if then the divine beauty, while not as yet seen, but only believed and hoped for, excites such a flame of desire after it, what will be its effect, when the vail being drawn aside, it shall be immediately and distinctly perceived? Certainly it will affect us with such an intoxication of delight, that we shall neither be willing nor able, even for a single moment to divert our attention from it. Bellarmine on the ascent of the mind to God,

‡ Plato in Phædro passim. (Though he there speaks these things as the memoirs of his supposed pre-existent soul.)

εν αυγη καθαρα, καθαροι ονλες, καλλος λαμπρον. *bright shining pulchritude*, &c.

[2.] It is an entire or united glory. We have something of the divine glory shining, now upon us: but the many interpositions cause a various refraction of its light. We have but its dispersed rays, it is scattered, disheveled beams: we shall then have it perfect and full. It is the eternal glory we are hereafter to behold. Eternity (as the notion of it is wont to be stated) is a duration that excludes both succession, and end. And if it be an unsuccessive duration, (though it is more difficult to apprehend how the being or enjoyments of a creature can come under that mensuration, or how there can be any such) the glory presented to the view of a blessed soul, cannot be presented by parcels, but at once. *Æternitas est interminabilis vitæ tota simul et perfecta possessio: eternity is the boundless, simultaneous, perfect possession of life. Boeth.* In our temporary state, while we are under the measure of time, we are not capable of the fulness of blessedness, or misery; for time exists not all together, but by parts. And indeed we can neither enjoy, nor suffer more, at once, than can be compassed within one moment; for no more exists together. But our relation to eternity (according to this notion of it) will render the same invariable appearance of glory, always presentaneous to us, in the entire fulness of it. We read indeed (1 Thes. 3. 10.) of certain υστερηματα πιστεως, *afterings of faith* (as it may be significantly enough rendered, let but the novelty of the expression be pardoned), things lacking we read it; but there will be here no υστερηματα δοξης, *afterings of glory*. What is perfect admits no increase; it is already full: and, why should not a full glory satisfy? There is here no expectation of (greater) future, to abate the pleasure of present discoveries. Why therefore shall not this satisfaction be conceived full and perfect? It must be the fulness of joy.

[3.] It is permanent glory; a never fading, unwithering glory, (αφθαρτον, αμαραντον 1 Pet. 1. 4.) glory that will never be sullied, or obscured, never be in a declination. This blessed face never grows old; never any wrinkle hath place in it. It is the eternal glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 10. 1 Pet. 5. 10. (in the other part of the notion of eternity), as it imports an endless duration, neither subject to decay, in itself, nor to injury, or impairment from without. As stable as the divine Being; Thy God, thy glory; the Lord thy everlasting light: Isa. 60. 19. If that have a true sense with respect to any of the church militant on earth, it must needs have a more full sense, in reference to it triumphing in heaven. As, therefore, full entire

glory affords fulness of joy; permanent, everlasting glory affords pleasures for evermore. Psal. 16. 11.

[4.] An appropriate glory, even to them it is so: a glory wherein they are really interested. It is the glory of *their* God, and *their* happiness is designed to them from it. They are not unconcerned in it, is the glory of God. It cannot but be grateful to them to behold the shining glory of their God; whom they feared and served before while they could have no such sight of him. That glory of his was once under a cloud, concealed from the world, wrapt up in obscurity: it now breaks the cloud and justifies the fear and reverence of his faithful and loyal servants, against atheistical rebels, that feared him not. It is infinitely pleasing to see him now so glorious, whom they thought to have a glory beyond all their conceptions before; while others would not think so of him, but judged it safe to slight, and set him in at nought. Subjects share in their prince's glory, children in their father's. But besides that collateral interest, that interest by reflection, they have a more direct interest in this glory. A true and real right: upon a manifold title, the father's gift, son's purchase, Holy Ghost's obsignation, and earnest; the promises tender; their faith's acceptance; their fore-runner's prepossession: yea, it is their inheritance; (Rom. 8. 17.) they are children, and therefore heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, to the same glory with him, (ch. 15. 7.) They are, by him, received to the glory of God, called to his kingdom and glory. 1. Thes. 2. 12. Will it not contribute exceedingly to their satisfaction, when they shall look upon this glory, not as unconcerned spectators, but as interested persons? This is my happiness, to behold and enjoy this blessed God; What a rapturous expression is that, God our own God shall bless us; and that, Thy God thy glory! (Psal. 67. 6.) Upon interest in God, follows their interest in his glory and blessedness: which is so much the dearer, and more valuable, as it is theirs: their glory, from their God. They shall be blessed by God, their own God; drink waters out of their own well. How endearing a thing is propriety! Another man's son is ingenious, comely, personable, this may be a matter of envy; but mine own is so, this is a joy. I read in the life of a devout nobleman of France, (Monsieur de Renti,) that receiving a letter from a friend, in which were inserted these words, *Deus meus, et omnia: my God and my all;* he thus returns back to him, "I know not what your intent was, to put into your letter these words, *Deus meus, et omnia: My God, and my all;* only you invite me thereby to return the same to you, and to all creatures; My God, and my all; my God, and my all; my God, and my all; If perhaps you take this for your motto, and use it to ex-

press how full your heart is of it; think you it possible, I should be silent upon such an invitation, and not express my sense thereof? Likewise, be it known unto you therefore, that he is my God, and my all; and if you doubt of it, I shall speak it a hundred times over. I shall add no more; for any thing else is superfluous, to him that is truly penetrated with my God, and my all: I leave you therefore in this happy state of jubilation; and conjure you, to beg for me, of God, the solid sense of these words." And do we think, My God, and my all; or my God and my Glory, will have lost its emphasis in heaven? or that it will be less significant among awaked souls? These things concur then, concerning the object: it is most excellent, even divine, entire, permanent, and theirs: how can it but satisfy!

CHAP. VI.

What the vision of God's face contributes to the soul's satisfaction estimated (2.) From the consideration of the act of vision itself. Wherein this pleasure surpasses that of sense. A comparison pursued more at large. [1] Between this intuition and discourse. [2] Between it and faith. This intuition more absolutely considered: Its characters, and what they contribute to the satisfaction of the blessed soul: That it is (namely) efficacious, comprehensive, fixed, appropriative.

(2) THE act of vision, or intuition itself. How great the pleasure will be that accrues to the blessed from this sight of God's face, is very much also to be estimated from the nature of the act, as well as the excellency of the object. Inasmuch as every vital act is pleasant, the most perfect act of the noblest faculty of the soul, must needs be attended with highest pleasure. It is a pleasure that most nearly imitates divine pleasure. And every thing is more perfect, as it more nearly approaches divine perfections.* Intellectual pleasure is as much nobler

* Res sunt perfectiores vel imperfectiores prout à summa perfectione magis vel minimè abscedunt. All things are more or less perfect in proportionas they more or less nearly approach to the supreme perfection.

than that of sense, as an immortal spirit is more noble than a clod of earth. The pleasure of sense is drossy, feculent, the pleasure of the mind refined and pure; that, is faint and languid, this, lively and vigorous; that, scant and limited, this, ample and enlarged; that, temporary and fading, this, durable and permanent; that, flashy, superficial, this, solid and intense; that, raving and distracted, this, calm and composed.* Whence even that great reputed sensualist, Epicurus himself, professedly disclaims or is represented as disclaiming, the conceit of placing happiness in sensual delights.

And as the pleasure of intellection excels all the pleasure of sense; so doth the pleasure of intuition, excel all other intellectual pleasure. Let us to this purpose, but consider, generally, this way of knowing things, and compare it with those two other ways, by—discourse and by faith.

[1.] By discourse. I mean (that I be not mistaken by the vulgar reader) the discourse of the mind or ratiocination; that way of attaining the knowledge of things, by comparing one thing with another, considering their mutual relations, connexions, dependancies; and so arguing out, what was more doubtful and obscure, from what was more known and evident. To the altogether unlearned it will hardly be conceivable; and to the learned it need not be told how high a gratification this employment of his reason naturally yields to the mind of a man; when the harmonious contexture of truths with truths; the apt co-incidence, the secret links and junctures of co-herent notions, are

* Pet. Molin. de cognitione Dei. See Culverwel of the light of nature, speaking (as I remember) to this purpose, c. 17. Quocirca et cum universe voluptatem beatæ vitæ esse finem dicimus; longe profecto absumus, ut eas voluptates, quæ sunt virorum luxu diffluentium, aut aliorum etiam, quatenus spectantur in ipsa motione, actioneve fruendi; qua nimirum sensus jucunde dulciterque afficitur, intelligamus; veluti quidam rem ignorantes, aut a nobis dissentientes, aut alioquin adversum nos male affecti, interpretantur; sed illud duntaxat (ut res iterum dicatur) intelligimus: non dolere corpore; animo non perturbari; wherefore while we say in general, that pleasure is the end of a well spent life, we are very far from meaning that pleasure which is enjoyed only by persons of luxurious and dissolute habits, or by others only so long as they are in the very act or instant of gratification—a pleasure which consists in the voluptuous emotion of the senses; (though this is the idea which some, whether from ignorance, party spirit or ill-will; give our system) but we mean as has been said before, the freedom of the body from pain and the mind from perturbation. Gassend: Syntag. Philos Epicur: See his epistle to Menoceus in D. Laert.

clearly discerned; when effects are traced up to their causes;* properties lodged in their native subjects; things sifted to their principles. What a pleasure is it, when a man shall apprehend himself regularly led on (though but by a slender thread of discourse) through the labyrinths of nature; when still new discoveries are successfully made, every further inquiry ending in a further prospect, and every new scene of things entertaining the mind with a fresh delight! How many have suffered a voluntary banishment from the world, as if they were wholly strangers, and unrelated to it: rejected the blandishments of sense; macerated themselves with unwearied studies, for this pleasure; making the ease and health of their bodies, to give place to the content and satisfaction of their minds! But how much intuition hath the advantage, above this way of knowledge, may be seen in these two obvious respects.

First. It is a more facile way of knowing. ‡ Here is no need of a busy search, a tiresome indagation, (the difficulty whereof makes the more slothful, rather trust than try) a chaining together of consquences. The soul hath its clothing (its vestment of light) upon as cheap terms as the lilies theirs; doth neither toil nor spin for it: and yet Solomon, in all the glory of his famed wisdom, was not arrayed like it. This knowledge saves the expence of study; is instantaneous, not successive. The soul now sees more, at one view, in a moment, than before in a life's time: as a man hath a speedier, and more grateful prospect of a pleasant country, by placing himself in some commodious station, that commands the whole region, than by travelling through it. It is no pains to look upon what offers itself to my eye. Where there is a continued series of consequences, that lie naturally connected, the soul pleasingly observes this continuity; but views the whole frame, the whole length of the line, at once(so far as its limited capacity can extend)and needs not discuss every particle, severally, in this series of truths, and proceed *gradatim*, from the knowledge of one truth to another; in which case only one, at once, would be present to its view. It sees things that are connected, not because they are so: *atque ut homini sedenti ad ripam fluminis, sola aqua presens est quæ ei hoc temporis punctulo observatur; eidem vero homini, totum flumen presens esset, si supra summam aeris re-*

* Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas: happy the man who can trace the effects of things to their causes.

‡ Nonnulli tædio investigandæ veritatis, cuilibet opinioni potius ignavi succumbunt; quam in exploranda veritate, pertinaci diligentia, perseverare volunt: there are some men who from the difficulty of investigating truth, indolently fall in with any sentiment proposed to them, rather than persevere in the research with a determined diligence. Min: Felix Oct. 9.

gionem erectus, uno aspectu fontem et ostium fluminis posset aspicere : Ita oculo Dei, &c. as a man, conveniently placed in some eminent station, may possibly see, at one view, all the successive parts of a gliding stream : but he that sits by the water's side, not changing his place, sees the same parts, only because they succeed ; and these that pass, make way for them that follow, to come under his eye : so doth a learned man describe the unsuccessive knowledge of God ; of which the glorified souls way of knowing, is an imitation ; as the very words seeing and beholding (which it is so frequently set forth by in scripture) do naturally import. Yet that, as to them, all ratiocination shall be excluded that state, I see no reason to admit; though with God it can have no place. And, as he is reckoned to live a pleasanter life, that spends upon a plentiful estate ; than he that gets his bread by the sweat of his brows : so this more easy way of knowing, must needs be reckoned more pleasing. This knowledge is as Jacob's venison, not hunted for but brought to hand. The race is not here to the swift. The unlearned ideot knows as much as the profoundest Rabbi (at least with as much satisfaction ;) and all arms are of an equal size ; or are content with their own measure.

Secondly. It is more certain. For what do we use to reckon so certain as what we see with our eyes ? Better (even in this respect) is the sight of the eyes, than the wandering of the desire. While here, the mind is carried, with most earnest desire, to pursue knowledge, it very often mistakes its way, and miserably wanders. In our most wary ratiocinations, we many times shoot at rovers : but when we know by this vision, our mark is immediately presented to our eye. We are in danger to be imposed upon by delusive appearances of things. We look through no fallacious mediums, are held in no suspence ; puzzled with no doubts, whether such consequences will hold, such conclusions be rightly inferred ; and so are not retarded from giving a present unwavering assent. Here are no perplexing intricacies, no dubious hallucinations, or uncertain guesses. We see things, as they are, by a simple and undeceiving light, with both subjective, and objective certainly, being secure both from doubt, and error.

[2.] Faith. How magnificent things doth scripture speak of this grace ! which the experience also of such as have been wont to live by it (that is to make it the governing principle of their lives) doth abundantly confirm. How clear are its apprehensions ! it is the ελεγχος (Heb. 11. 1.) evidence of things not seen : how sweet its enjoyments ! whom not seeing ye love ; and though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. 1. Pet. 1. 8. Even the

heathen theology hath magnified it above knowledge "What is it (saith one) that unites us with the self-goodness, and so joins us thereto, that it quiets or gives rest to all our actions and motions? I will express it in one word; it is faith itself, which unspeakably and after a hidden manner, doth unite and conjoin happy souls with the self-good. For (saith he) it concerns us not, either in a way of science, ου λογικως, ουδε τελεως, αλλα επιδοντας εαυτους τω θειω φωτι, &c. *or with any imperfection, to inquire after the good; but to behold ourselves in the divine light, and so shutting our eyes, to be placed in the unknown and secret unity of beings. Proclus in Plat. Theol.* And a later writer (Picus Mirand,) gives us this, as a conclusion from that former author, that as faith, which is credulity, is below science; so that faith, which is truly so called, is, super-substantially, above science and intelligence, immediately uniting us to God. But it is evident, intuitive knowledge far exceeds even faith also.

First. It is more distinct and clear. Faith is taking a thing upon report; (Isa. 53. 1.) Who hath believed our report? And they are more general, languid apprehensions, we have of things this way. Faith enters at the ear; it comes by hearing. Rom. 10. 17. And if we compare the perceptions of those two external senses, that of hearing, and sight: the latter is unspeakably more clear, and satisfying. He that hath knowledge of a foreign country, only by report of another, hath very indistinct apprehensions of it, in comparison of him who hath travelled it himself. While the queen of Sheba only heard of Solomon's glory, she could not satisfy herself, without an αυτοψια the sight of her own eye; and, when she saw it, she saith, the one half was not told her of what she now beheld. The ear more slowly and gradually receives, and the tongue more defectively expresses to another, an account of things: than ones ocular inspection would take it in. But, as to the excellency of this intuitive knowledge above faith; the comparison lies not, between knowing by the ministry of a more noble sense, and a less noble; but knowing by dependance on a less noble, and without dependance upon any at all. When God hath been pleased to afford discoveries, in that way of vision, to men in the body, (his prophets, &c.) he hath usually bound up their senses, by sleep, or trances; sense hath had no part or lot in this matter; unto believing it must necessarily concur.

Secondly. More effective. What we see, even with our external eye, much more powerfully moves our heart, than what we only give credit to, upon hearsay. The queen of Sheba much admired, no doubt, Solomon's famed splendour, and magnificence, while she only heard of it; but when she saw it, it puts

her into an ecstacy; it ravished away her soul; she had no more spirit, &c. What would the sight of the divine glory do, if God did not strengthen with all might: were there not as well glorious power to support, as powerful glory to transform! Job had heard of God, by the hearing of the ear, but when once his eye saw him, (whether that were by the appearance of any sensible glory; which is probable enough, for it is said, the Lord answered him out of the whirlwind: or whether by a more immediate revelation, it is less-material) what work did it make in his soul! The devils believe, and tremble; so impressive are the pre-apprehensions of judgment to come, and the consequents thereof, with them; yet their present torment, thence, is no torment, in comparison "art thou come to torment us before the time?" of what they expect. Let wicked men consider this, (they will have their intuition in hell to;) were your belief, and terror thereupon, with reference to the eternal judgment, and the impendent wrath of God, equal to what the devils themselves have, upon the same account; actual sensation will make you more exceed yourselves in point of misery, than the devils do now exceed you. There is, no doubt, a proportionable difference between the impressions of present faith, and future vision, with holy souls. Now, not seeing, yet believing, they rejoice, with joy unspeakable. Their present joy cannot be spoken; their future then cannot be thought! Experience daily tells us; how greatly, sensible, present objects have the advantage upon us, beyond those that are spiritual and distant, though infinitely more excellent and important. When the tables are turned, the now sensible things disappear; a new scene of things invisible and eternal, is immediately presented to our view; when the excellency of the objects, the dispositeness of the subjects, the nature of the act, shall all multiply the advantages, on this part, how affective will this vision be, beyond what we have ever found the faint apprehensions of our so much disadvantaged faith to amount to; a kind message from an indulgent father, to his far-distant son, informing of his welfare, and yet continuing love, will much affect; but the sight of his father's face, will even transport, and overcome him with joy.

But further consider this intuition a little more particularly and absolutely in itself. So, you may take this somewhat distincter account of it, in some few particulars, corresponding to those, by which the object (the glory to be beheld,) was lately characterized.—It will be a *vigorous*, *efficacious* intuition; as that which it beholds is the most excellent; even the *divine* glory. Such an object cannot be beheld, but with an eye full of lively vigour; a sparkling, a radiant eye: a weak eye would be struck blind, would fail, and be closed up at the first glance.

We must suppose, then, this vision to be accompanied with the highest vitality, the strongest energy, a mighty plenitude of spirit and power no less than the divine: nothing but the divine power can sufficiently fortify the soul to behold divine glory. When the apostle speaks only of his desire of glory, he that hath wrought us to this selfsame thing (saith he) is God, he that hath moulded us, suitably framed us (as the word signifieth) for this thing, is God: it is the work of a Deity to make a soul desire glory: certainly then, it is his work to give the power of beholding it. And by how much the more of power, so much the more of pleasure in this vision. Weak sight would afford but languid joy: but when the whole soul, animated with divine power and life, shall seat itself in the eye; when it shall be as it were, all eye, (as one said of God, whom now it perfectly imitates) and be wholly intent upon vision; apply itself thereto with all its might, as its only business; (S. Hieronym;) what satisfying joys doth it now taste! renewed by every repeated view! how doth it now, as it were, prey upon glory; as the eye of the eagle upon the beams of the sun! We meet with the expression of *aures bibulæ*; *thirsty ears*; here will be *oculi bibuli, thirsty eyes*: a soul ready to drink in glory at the eye. If vision be by intromission, what attractive eyes are here, drawing in glory, feeding upon glory? If by extramission, what piercing darting eyes, sending forth the soul at every look to embrace the glorious object.

There is great power that now attends realizing thoughts of God: whether it appear in the consequent working of the soul directly towards God; or by way of reflection upon itself. If directly towards God; how mightily is he admired! "Who is a God like unto thee?" If by reflection upon our own sin, and vileness; how deeply doth it humble!—"Now mine eye seeth thee, therefore I abhor myself—Woe is me, I am undone,—Mine eyes have seen the Lord of glory." If by way of reflection, upon our interest in him, or relation to him; how mightily doth it support and comfort! "I will look to the Lord,—my God will hear me." Mic. 7. 7. How full of rich sense is that scripture, They looked to him and were lightened! Psal. 34. 5. One look clothed them with light, cast a glory upon their souls, filled them with life and joy; it was but a thought, the cast of an eye, and they were as full as hearts could hold. Oh the power then of these heavenly visions! when we dwell in the views of that transforming glory!—This will be a *comprehensive* intuition; as its object is *entire* glory. I mean comparatively, not absolutely comprehensive. More of the divine glory will be comprehended, unspeakably, than before. It is called, we know by the schoolmen, the knowledge of *comprehensors*, in contra-

diction to that of *viators*. We shall better be able to discern the divine excellencies together; have much more adequate conceptions; a fuller, and more complete notion of God: we shall see him as he is. It is too much observable, how in our present state, we are prejudiced by our partial conceptions of him; and what an inequality they cause in the temper of our spirits. For wicked men, the very notion they have of God, proves fatal to their souls, or is of a most destructive tendency; because they comprehend not together what God hath revealed of himself. Most usually, they confine those few thoughts of God they have, only to his mercy; and that exclusively, as to his holiness and justice; hence their vain and mad presumption. The notion of an unholy (or a not-holy, and not-just) God, what wickedness would it not induce? "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself:" a God after their own hearts; then the reins are let loose. More rarely, when the conscience of guilt hath arrested the self-condemned wretch, God is thought of, under no other notion, than of an irreconcilable enemy and avenger; as one thirsting after the blood of souls, and that will admit of no atonement. So without all pretence, and so flatly contrary to all his discoveries of himself, do men dare to affix to him black and horrid characters, forged only out of the radicated and inveterate hatred of their own hearts against him, (that never take up good thoughts of any one:) only because they have no mind to acquaint themselves with him; and that they may have some colour for their affected distance: and so, perhaps, never return; but perish under a horrid wilful despair. And even the people of God themselves are too apt sometimes, so wholly to fix their eye upon love and grace, that they grow into an unbecoming, uncreaturely familiarity; while the thoughts of infinite majesty, adorable greatness and glory are asleep, sometimes possibly, they apprehend vindictive justice, the indignation and jealousy of God against sin, (precluding meanwhile, the consideration of his indulgent compassions towards truly humble and penitent souls) to that degree of affrightment and dread, that they grow into an unchildlike strangeness towards him, and take little pleasure in drawing nigh to him. But when, *now* our eye shall take in the discovery of divine glory equally; how sweet and satisfying a pleasure will arise from that grateful mixture of reverent love, humble joy, modest confidence, meek courage, a prostrate magnanimity, a triumphant veneration; a soul shrinking before the divine glory into nothing, yet not contenting itself with any less enjoyment, than of him, who is all in all!

There is nothing here in this complexion, or temper of soul, but hath its warrant, in the various aspect of the face of God

comprehensively beheld; nothing but what is (even by its suitableness) highly grateful, and pleasing.—It will be *fixed, steady* intuition, as its object is *permanent* glory. The vision of God can neither infer, nor admit weariness. The eye cannot divert; its act is eternally delectable, and affords an unvariable, undecaying pleasure. Sensual delights soon end in loathing; quickly bring a glutting surfeit; and degenerate into torments,* when they are continued and unintermittent. A philosopher in an epistle which he writes to a friend, from the court of Dionysius, where he was forcibly detained, thus bemoans himself, Κακοδαιμονεμεν ω Αντισθενες, α μετριως, &c. "*We are unhappy, O Antisthenes, beyond measure; and how can we but be unhappy, that are hardened by the tyrant every day with sumptuous feasts, plentiful compotations, precious ointments, gorgeous apparel? and I knew as soon as I came into this island and city, how unhappy my life would be.*" *Socratico rum. Epis.* 9. This is the nature and common condition of even the most pleasing sensible objects: they first tempt, then please a little, then disappoint, and lastly vex. The eye that beholds them, blasts them quickly, rifles and deflowers their glory; and views them with no more delight at first, than disdain afterwards. Creature-enjoyments have a bottom, are soon drained and drawn dry: hence there must be frequent diversions; other pleasures must be sought out; and are chosen, not because they are better, but because they are new.

This demonstrates the emptiness, and vanity of the creature. Affection of variety only proceeds from sense of want; and is a confession, upon trial, that there is not in such an enjoyment what was expected. Proportionably, in the state of glory, a constant indeficient fulness, renders the blessed soul undesirous of any change. There is no need of varieties, of diversions: what did once please, can never cease to do so. This glory cannot fade or lose any thing of its attractive power. The faculty cannot languish, or lose the disposition, by which it is contempered and made proportionable thereto. Hence no weariness can ensue. What! a soul in which the love of God is perfected, grow weary of beholding him! The sun will sooner grow weary of shining; the touched needle of turning itself to its wonted point; every thing will sooner grow weary of its centre; and the most fundamental laws of nature be sooner antiquated and made void for ever. The eye of the fool, Solomon tells us, is in the ends of the earth; (Prov. 17. 24.) His only, is a rolling

* Proba istas, quæ voluptates vocantur, ubi modum transcenderint, pœnas esse: prove by experience that what are called pleasures when they exceed proper grounds become pains. Sen. Ep. 83.

wandering eye, that knows not where to fix. Wisdom guides, and fixes the eye of the holy soul; determines it unto God only: I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel, my reins also instruct me,—I have set the Lord always before me. Psal. 16. 7 8. Surely heaven will not render it less capable of dijudication; of passing a right judgment of the excellency and worth of things. And here, a rational judgment will find no want; and an irrational will find no place. Therefore, as permanent glory will certainly infer a perpetual vision; perpetuated vision will as certainly perpetuate the soul's satisfaction, and blessedness.—It will be a *possessive* intuition: as it is an *appropriate* glory which it pitches upon. It will be the language of every look, "This glory is mine." The soul looks not upon it shyly, as if it had nothing to do with it; or with slight and careless glances: but the very posture of its eye, speaks its interest, and proclaims the pretensions it hath to this glory. With how different an aspect, doth a stranger passing by, and the owner, look upon the same house, the same lands; A man's eye lays his claim for him, and avows his right. A grateful object that one can say is his own, he arrests it with his eye; so do saints with appropriative looks behold their God, and the divine glory. Even with such an eye as he was wont to behold them; To this man will I look, &c. (Isa. 66. 1. 2.) that is, as the place of my rest, mentioned before; he designs him with his eye. Which is the import of that expression, The Lord knows who are is; (2. Tim. 2. 19.) his eye marks them out; owns them as his own: as concerning others, whom he disowns, the phrase is, I know you not. And how vastly different is such an intuition, from that, when I look upon a thing, with a hungry, lingering eye, which I must never enjoy or never expect to be the better for? This vision is fruitive, unites the soul with the blessed object which kind of sight is meant, when actual blessedness, is so often, expressed by seeing God. We see then what vision, the sight of God's face contributes to the satisfaction of blessed souls.

CHAP. VII.

Having considered in the preceding chapters, what vision contributes to satisfaction in reference to the *object* and the *act* of vision, we come now to inquire *Secondly* Wherein assimilation (the likeness or glory of God impressed) contributes unto satisfaction: where is particularly propounded to be shewn 1 What pleasure it involves. 2 What it disposes to. (1) What it involves in the *esse*, *being* of it. (2) What in the *cognosci*, *knowledge* of it. The pleasure of being like God discovered, shewing concerning the image of God [1] Generally, that it is the soul's health and soundness restored; that it is a vital, an intimate, a connatural, a perfect image.

OUR next business, is to discover,

Secondly. What assimilation, or the impressed likeness of God, may further add to this satisfied state; or, what satisfying pleasure the blessed soul finds in this, that it is like God. And here we are distinctly to inquire into—the pleasure which such an assimilation to God involves in itself, and—that which is tends, to or disposes.

1. The pleasure it involves in itself; or, which is taken in it abstractly considered; which we may more particularly unfold by shewing—the pleasure involved, in being like God: and—in knowing or reflecting upon the same: the *esse* and the *cognosci* of this assimilation.

(1.) The pleasure in being like God; which may be discovered both by a general consideration hereof, and by instancing in some particulars, wherein blessed souls shall be like him.

[1.] It is obvious to suppose an inexpressible pleasure, in the very feeling, the inward sensation, the holy soul will have of that happy frame in *general*, whereinto it is now brought; that joyful harmony, that entire rectitude it finds within itself. You may as soon separate light from a sun-beam, as pleasure from such a state. This likeness or conformity to God is an ευκρασια, a perfect temperament; an athletic healthiness; a strong sound constitution of soul. Do but imagine, what it is to a man's body, after a wasting sickness, to find himself well. Frame a notion

of the pleasure of health and soundness, when both, all the parts and members of the body are in their proper places and proportions; and a lively, active vigour, a sprightly strength possesses every part, and actuates the whole; how pleasant is this temper! If we were all body, there could be no greater felicity than this. But by how much the more noble any creature is, so is it capable of more exquisite pains, or pleasures. * Sin is the sickness and disease of the soul; enfeebles all its powers, exhausts its vigour, wastes its strength. You know the restless tossings, the weary rollings to and fro, of a diseased languishing body; such is the case of a sinful soul. Let it but seriously bethink itself, and then speak its own sense, (but here is the malignity of the disease, it cannot be serious, it always raves;) What will it be? "O I can take no rest"! The way of wickedness is called a way of pain: דרך עצב Psal. 139. 24. Sinners would find it so, if the violence of the disease had not bereft them of sense; Nothing savours with me; I can take comfort in nothing. The wicked are as a troubled sea (as their name imports) that cannot rest, whose waters, &c. רשע Isa. 57. 20. The image of God, renewed in holiness and righteousness, is health restored, after such a consuming sickness; which, when we awake, when all the drowsiness that attends our disease is shaken off, we find to be perfect. The fear of the Lord (an ordinary paraphrase of holiness or piety) is said to be health to the navel, and marrow to the bones. Our Lord Jesus invites wearied sinners to come to him, to take his yoke on them, to learn of him, (Matt. 11. 28.) that is, to imitate him, to be like him, and promises they shall find rest to their souls. How often do we find grace and peace, in conjunction, in the apostles, salutations and benedictions? We are told that the ways of divine wisdom (that is which it prescribeth) are all pleasantness and peace. (Prov. 3. 13.) that in keeping the commandments of God, there is great reward. (Psal. 19. 11.) that they are not grievous, (1 John. 5. 3.) that is (for there seems to be a *meiosis* in the

* Τιμιωτερον ψυχη σωματος, το δε τιμιωτερον αγαθον μειζον, το δε τω μειζονι, αγαθω εναντιον, μειζον κακον αγαθον δε μειζον υγεια ψυχης υγειας σωματος μειζον αν κακον, νοσος ψυχης, νοσω σωματος νοσος ψυχης μοχθηρια, &c. The mind is more noble than the body and as it is more noble it contains the greater good, while whatever is contrary to it must be the greater evil. Now the health of the soul is a greater good than that of the body; consequently the sickness of the soul is a greater evil than that of the body. The sickness of the soul is sin, &c. Max. Tyr. dissert. 41.

‡ Hinc illud et tædium et displicentia sui, et nusquam residentis animi volutatio, &c. hence that weariness that internal disgust and agitation of the perpetually unsettled mind, &c. Sen. de Tranquanimi.

expression) are joyous, pleasant. And what are his commandments, but those expresses of himself, wherein we are to be like him, and conform to his will? The kingdom of God (that holy order which he settles in the spirits of men; his law transcribed and impressed upon the soul; which is nothing else but its conformation and likeness to himself:) is righteousness, and then peace. Rom. 14. 17. The φρονημα πνευματος, (Rom. 8. 6.) that *notion*, and *judgment*, and *savour* of things; that excellent temper of mind and heart; (for that is the extent of the expression) whereof the holy Spirit of God is both the author and pattern, is life and peace; involves them in itself. When one thing is thus, in *casu recto*, predicated of another, it speaks their most intimate connexion, as Rom. 14. 17. above: so 1 John. 5. 3. This is love that, &c. So here, such a mind is life and peace, though the copula be not in the original, it is fitly supplied in the translation;) You cannot separate life and peace from such a mind: it hath no principle of death or trouble in it. Let such as know any thing of this blessed temper and complexion of soul, compare this scripture and their own experience together; when, at any time, they find their souls under the blessed empire and dominion of a spiritual mind; when spirituality wholly rules and denominates them: are not their souls the very region of life and peace? both these in conjunction, life and peace? not raging life, not stupid peace; but a placid, peaceful life, a vital vigorous rest and peace: it is not the life of a fury, nor peace of a stone: life that hath peace in it, and peace that hath life in it. Now can the soul say, "I feel myself well; all is now well with me." Nothing afflicts the spiritual mind, so far, and while it is such: it is wrapt up, and clothed in its own innocency and purity; and hereby become invulnerable, not liable to hurtful impressions.* Holiness (under the name of light, for that is, by the context, the evident meaning of the word there) is by the apostle spoken of as the christian's armour. (Rom. 13. 12.) Put on, saith he, the armour of light, in opposition to the works of darkness, which he had mentioned immediately before. Strange armour! that a man may see through. A good man's armour is, that he needs none: his armour is an open breast; that he can expose himself; is fearless

* Invulnerabile est non quod non feritur, sed quod non lædituv. Sen. de constantia sapientis, sive quod in sapientem non cadit injuria: to be invulnerable is not to be free from all attacks, but to be uninjured by them. Seneca on the constancy of the wise man or his superiority to injuries.

‡ Integer vitæ scelerisque purus, &c. He that is of an upright life and free from vice. Hor. Μιμηλαι.

of any harm. Who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? It should be read imitators; so the word signifies: and so, whereas following is either of a pattern, or an end; the former must be meant here, by the natural importance of that word. And hence, by "that which is good" (Τȣ αγαθȣ) is not to be understood created goodness; for it is not enough to imitate that goodness; for so we must be good; but the words are capable of being read, him that is good, or (which is all one) the good. * And so it is the increate good, the blessed God himself, formally considered under the notion of good. Nothing can harm you if you be like God, that is the plain sense of this scripture. Likeness to God, is armour of proof, that is an imitation of him, namely in his moral goodness; which holiness as a general name of it comprehends. A person truly like God, is secure from any external violence; so far as that it shall never be able to invade his spirit. He is in spirit far raised above the tempestuous, stormy region, and converses where winds and clouds have no place.

Nor can, so far as this temper of soul prevails, any evil grow upon such a mind within itself. It is life and peace; it is light and purity; for it is the image, the similitude of God. God is light, and with him is no darkness at all. 1 Joh. 1. 5. Holy souls were darkness, but they are light in the Lord. Eph 5. 8. He the Father of light, they the children of light. Jam. 1. 19. They were darkness: not, in the dark; but, in the abstract, "darkness": as if that were their whole nature; and they nothing else but an impure mass of conglobated darkness. ‖ So, ye are light: as if they were that, and nothing else; nothing but a sphere of light. Why suppose we such a thing, as an entire sphere of nothing else but pure light? What can work any disturbance here or raise a storm within it? A calm, serene thing: perfectly homogeneous, void of contrariety, or any self-repugnant quality: how can it disquiet itself? We cannot yet say, that thus it is with holy souls in their present state, according to the highest literal import of these words, Ye are light: but thus it will be when they awake; when they are satisfied with this likeness. They shall then be like God fully, and throughout. O the joy and pleasure of a soul made after such

* As Plato and his followers used the expression, ταγσθον, fully according to the sense of Mat. 19. 17.

‖ Σφαιρα ψυχης αυτοειδης, οταν μητε εκτεινηται επι τι, μητε εσω συντρεχη, μητε συνιζανη, αλλα φωτι λαμπηται, &c. the mental sphere is harmonious; when it is susceptible neither of attraction from without nor of confusion within, but is eradiated with light. Marc. Antonian. lib. 11.

a similitude! Now glory is become as it were their being; they are glorified. Glory is revealed into them, transfused throughout them. Every thing that is conceivable under the notion of an excellency, competent to created nature, is now to be found with them; and they have it in-wrought into their very beings. So that in a true sense it may be said, that they are light; they not only have such excellencies, but they are them: as the moralist saith of the wise, or virtuous man, *Omnia non tam habere quam esse. that he not so properly hath all things, as is all things. Sen.* It is said of man, in respect of his naturals, he is the image and glory of God. 1 Cor. 11. 7. As for his supernatural excellencies, though they are not essential to man, they are more expressive of God; and are now become so inseparable from the nature of man too, in this his glorified state, that he can as soon cease to be intelligent, as holy. The image of God, even in this respect, is not separable from him: nor blessedness (surely) from this image. As the divine excellencies, being in their infinite fulness in God, are his own blessedness; so is the likeness, the participation of them in the soul, that now bears this image, its blessedness. Nothing can be necessary to its full satisfaction, which it hath not in itself, by a gracious vouchsafement and communication. The good man (in that degree which his present state admits of,) Solomon tells us, is satisfied from himself: (Prov. 14. 14.) he doth not need to traverse the world, to seek his happiness abroad; he hath the matter of satisfaction, even that goodness which he is now enriched with, in his own breast and bosom: yet he hath it all by participation from the fountain-goodness.* But that participated goodness is so intimately one with him, as sufficiently warrants and makes good the assertion, he is satisfied from himself: namely from himself, not primarily, or independently; but by derivation from him, who is all in all, and more intimate to us, than we to ourselves. And what is that participated goodness, but a degree of the divine likeness? But when that goodness shall be fully participated: when this image and imitation of the divine goodness, shall be complete and entire; than shall we know the rich exuberant sense of those words. How fully will this image or likeness satisfy then! And yet more distinctly, we may apprehend how satisfying this likeness or image impressed will be, if a little further deferring the view of the particulars of this likeness which we have designed to instance in, we consider these general properties of it.

* Intimo nostro intimior. Esse nostrum laudabile: more intimate than our inmost soul. The very possession is an honor. Gibeuf. de libertate, ex. Plat. and Aug.

First. It is a vital image: not the image only of him that lives, the living God: but it is his living and soul-quickening image. It is the likeness of him, in that very respect; an imitation and participation of the life of God; by which, once revived, the soul lives that was dead before. It is not a dead picture, a dumb shew, an unmoving statue; but a living, speaking, walking image; that where with the child is like the father: the very life of the subject where it is; and by which it lives as God, speaks and acts conformably to him. An image, not such a one as is drawn with a pencil, that expresses only colour and figure; but such a one as is seen in a glass,* that represents life and motion, as was noted from a worthy author before. It is even, in its first and more imperfect draught, an analogical participation (as we must understand it) of the divine nature; (2 Pet. 1. 4.) before which first tincture, those preludious touches of it upon the spirit of man, his former state is spoken of as an alienation from the life of God; (Eph. 4. 18.) as having no interest, no communion therein. The putting on of the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, (ver. 23 34.) is presently mentioned, in direct opposition to that dismal state, implying that to be a participation of the divine life: and certainly, so far as it is so, it is a participation of the divine blessedness too.

Secondly. It is an image most intimate, therefore, to its subject. Glory it is: but not a superficial skin-deep glory; such as shone in Moses' face which he covered with a vail. It is thoroughly transformative; changes the soul throughout; not in external appearance, but in its very nature. All outward embellishments would add little felicity to a putrid, corrupt soul. That, would be but painting a sepulchre: This, adds ornament unto life; and both, especially to the inward man. It is not paint in the face, while death is at the heart; but it is the radication of such a principle within as will soon form and attemper the man universally to itself. It is glory: blessedness participated, brought home and lodged in a man's own soul, in his own bosom; he cannot then but be satisfied. A man may have a rich stock of outward comforts, and while he hath no heart to enjoy them, be never the happier. But it is impossible, that happiness should be thus lodged in his soul, made so intimate, and one with him; and yet, that he should not be satisfied, not be happy.

Thirdly. An image connatural to the spirit of man. Not a thing alien, and foreign to his nature, put into him purposely,

* Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat: just so did he carry his eyes, his hands, his countenance.

as it were, to torment and vex him; but an ancient well-known inhabitant, that had place in him from the beginning. Sin is the injurious intruder; which therefore puts the soul into a commotion, and permits it not to rest, while it hath any being there. This image calms it, restores it, works a peaceful, orderly composure within; returns it to itself, to its pristine, blessed state; being re-seated there, as in its proper, primitive subject. For though this image, in respect of corrupted nature be supernatural; in respect of institute, and undefiled nature, it was in a true sense natural, as hath been demonstrated by divers of ours against the papists; and upon the matter, yielded by some of the more moderate among themselves.* At least it was connate with human nature, consentaneous to it, and perfective of it. We are speaking, it must be remembered, of that part of the divine image, that consists in moral excellencies; there being another part of it, as hath been said, that is, even in the strictest sense, natural. There is nothing in the whole moral law of God, (in conformity whereunto this image did, *ab origine, originally*, consist) nothing of what he requires from man, that is at all destructive of his being, prejudicial to his comforts, repugnant to his most innate principles: nothing that clashes with his reason, or is contrary to his interest: or that is not, most directly, conservative of his being and comforts agreeable to his most rational principles, subservient to his best and truest interest. For what doth God the Lord require, but fear and love, service, (Deut. 10. 12. Mic. 6. 8.) and holy walking from an entire and undivided soul? what, but what is good; not only in itself, but for us; and, in respect whereof, his law is said to be holy, just and good? Rom. 7. 12. And what he requireth, he impresseth. This law, written in the heart, is this likeness. How grateful then will it be, when, after a long extermination and exile, it returns and re-possesses the soul, is recognized by it, becomes to it a new nature, (yea, even a divine) a vital, living law, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus? Rom. 8. 2. What grievance, or burden, is it to do the dictates of nature? actions that easily and freely flow from their own principles? and, when blessedness itself is infolded in those very acts and inclinations? How infinitely satisfying and delightful will it be, when the soul shall find itself connaturalized to every thing in its duty; and shall have no other duty incumbent on

* As may be seen by comparing what Estius says to the two questions, 1. An gratia fuerit primo homini naturalis? 2. Utrum originalis justitia fuerit homini supernaturalis? 1. Whether grace was natural to the first man? 2. Whether original righteousness was supernatural to man. I. 2. dist. 25.

it than to be happy! when it shall need no arguments, and exhortations to love God; nor need be urged and pressed, as heretofore, to mind him, to fear before him! when love, and reverence, and adoration, and praise; when delight, and joy, shall be all natural acts: can you separate this, in your own thoughts, from the highest satifaction?

Fourthly. This image will be now perfect: every way, fully perfect.—In *all its parts*; as it is in the first instant of the soul's entrance into the state of regeneration; the womb of grace knows no defective maimed births. And yet here is no little advantage, as to this kind of perfection. For now those lively lineaments of the new creature all appear, which were much obscured before; every line of glory is conspicuous, every character legible, the whole entire frame of this image is, in its exact symmetry and apt proportions, visible at once. And it is an unspeakable addition to the pleasure of so excellent a temper of spirit, that accrues from the discernable entireness of it. Heretofore, some gracious dispositions have been to seek, (through the present prevalence of some corruption or temptation) when there was most need and occasion for their being reduced into act. Hence the reward and pleasure of the act, and improvement of the principle, were lost together. Now, the soul will be equally disposed, to every holy exercise that shall be suitable to its state. Its temper shall be even and symmetral; its motions uniform, and agreeable: nothing done out of season; nothing seasonable omitted, for want of a present disposition of spirit thereto. There will be not only an habitual, but actual entireness of the frame of holiness in the blessed soul.—Again this image will be *perfect in degree*; so as to exclude all degrees of its contrary, and to include all degrees of itself. There will now be no longer any colluctation with contrary principles; no law in the members warring against the law of the mind; no lustings of the flesh against the spirit. That war is now ended in a glorious victory, and eternal peace. There will be no remaining blindness of mind, nor error of judgment, nor perverseness of will, nor irregularity or rebellion of affections: no ignorance of God, no aversation from him, or disaffection towards him. This likeness removes all culpable dissimilitude or unlikeness. This communicated glory fills up the whole soul, causes all clouds and darkness to vanish, leaves no place for any thing that is vile or inglorious; it is pure glory, free from mixture of any thing that is alien to it. And it is itself full. The soul is replenished, not with airy, evanid shadows; but with substantial, solid glory, a massive, weighty glory, (2 Cor. 4. 17.) for I know not but subjective glory may be taken in within the significancy of that known scripture, if it be not more principally intended:

in as much as the text speaks of a glory to be wrought out by afflictions, which are the files and furnaces, as it were, to polish or refine the soul into a glorious frame. It is cumulated glory, glory added to glory. Here it is growing progressive glory, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. 2 Cor. 3. 18. It shall, now, be stable, consistent glory; that carries a self-fulness with it (which some include also in the notion of purity* :) it is full of itself, includes every degree requisite to its own perfection. God hath now put the last hand to this glorious image, added to it its ultimate accomplishments. Now, a conformity to Christ, even in the resurrection from the dead, in his glorious state, is fully attained. That prize of the high calling of God is now won. And the humble sense of not having attained as yet, and of not being already perfect (in which humility, the foundation of the temple of God in a saint is laid, and the building raised) is turned into joyful acclamations, "Grace, grace!" for the laying on of the top-stone, the finishing of this glorious work. And when this temple is filled with the glory of the Lord, the soul itself replenished with the divine fulness, will not its joys be full too? For here is no sacrifice to be offered but that of praise, and joy is the proper seasoning for that sacrifice.

Now, the new creature hath arrived to the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. The first formation of this spiritual, as well as of the natural man, was hidden and secret; it was curiously wrought, and in a way no more liable to observation, than that of framing the child in the womb; as that is as hidden as the concoction of minerals, or precious stones, in the lower parts of the earth. No secrets of nature can outvie the mysteries of godliness. Its growth is also by very insensible degrees, as it is with the products of nature: but its arrival to perfection is infinitely more strange, than any thing in nature ever was. How sudden and wonderful is the change; when, in the twinkling of an eye, the blessed soul instantly awakes out of drowsy languishings, and miserable weakness, into perfect strength and vigour! As a man is, so is his strength; and as his strength is, so is his joy and pleasure. The sun is said to go forth as a strong man, rejoicing to run his race. Psal. 19. 5. When a man goes, in the fulness of his strength, upon any enterprize; how do his blood and spirits triumph beforehand! no motion of hand, or foot, is without a sensible delight. The strength of a man's spirit is, unspeakably, more than that

* Purum est quod est plenum sui, et quod minimum habet alieni: that is pure which possesses a self-fulness, and which has the least of what is foreign to itself.

of the outward man; its faculties and powers more refined and raised: and hence are rational or intellectual exercises and operations, much more delightful than corporal ones can be. But (still, as the man is, so is his strength) it is an incomparably greater strength that attends the heaven-born man. This man born of God, begotten of God, after his own likeness; this hero this Son of God, was born to conflicts, to victories, to triumphs. While he is yet but in his growing age, he overcomes the world (as Hercules the serpents in his cradle;) overcomes the wicked one, and is at last more than conqueror. A mighty power attends godliness; "a spirit of power, and of a sound mind:" but how much this divine creature grows, so much the more like God: and, being perfect, conflicts cease; he had overcome and won the crown before. And now all his strength runs out into acts of pleasure. Now when he shall go forth in his might to love God, (as we are required to love him now with all our might) and every act of praise shall be an act of power, done with a fulness of strength (as it is said their praises, at the bringing home of the ark, were with all their might) O! what will the pleasure be that shall accompany this state of perfection! Perfect power, and perfect pleasure are here met, and shall for ever dwell together, and be always commensurate to one another. They are so, here, in their imperfect state: our feeble, spiritless duties, weak, dead prayers: they have no more sweetness than strength, no more pleasure than power in them. Therefore we are listless, and have no mind to duties, as we find we are more frequently destitute of a spiritual liveliness and vigour therein. When a spirit of might and power goes on with us in the wonted course of our converses with God, we then forecast opportunities, and gladly welcome the season, when it extraordinarily occurs, of drawing nigh to him. It cannot be thought, that the connexion and proportion between these should fail in glory; or that, when every thing else is perfect, the blessed soul itself made perfect, even as God himself is perfect, in this bearing his likeness, should be unlike him in bliss; or its satisfaction be imperfect.

CHAP. VIII.

The satisfaction carried in the glory of God impressed, having been considered in the preceeding chapters *generally*, it is now [2] shewn by instances; certain particulars of this impression instanced in a dependent frame of spirit, subjection or self-devoting; love, purity, liberty, tranquility.

BUT besides the general consideration of this likeness, we shall instance.

[2.] In some of the particular excellencies comprehended in it, wherein the blessed shall imitate and resemble God: whence we may further estimate the pleasure and satisfaction, that being like God will afford. Only here let it be remembered, that as we all along in this discourse, speak of likeness to God in respect of moral excellencies: so by likeness to him, in respect of these, we understand, not only a participation of those which are communicable; but a correspondent impress also, as to those that are incommunicable; as hath been more distinctly opened in the propositions concerning this likeness. Which being premised, I shall give instances of both kinds, to discover somewhat of the inexpressible pleasure of being thus conformed to God. And here, pretermitting the impress of knowledge of which we have spoken under the former head of vision; we shall instance,

First. In a dependent frame of spirit: which is the proper impress of the divine all-sufficiency, and self-fulness, duly apprehended by the blessed soul. It is not easy to conceive a higher pleasure, than this, compatible to a creature,—the pleasure of dependance; yea, this is a higher than we can conceive. Dependance (which speaks the creatures σχεσις or habitude to its principle, as the subserviency which imports its habitude to its end) is twofold:—Natural: which is common and essential to all creatures; even when no such thing is thought on, or considered by them. The creatures live, move, and have their beings in God, whether they think of it or no.—Voluntary, or rational: which is *de facto*, peculiar; and *de jure*, common, to

reasonable creatures as such. A dependance that is, ἐκ προαιρέσεως, *elective*; and, with a foregoing reason, (which I understand by elective, not a liberty of doing, or not doing it) and concomitant consideration of what we do, and animadversion of our own act: when knowingly and willingly, understanding ourselves in what we do, we go out of ourselves, and live in God. This is the dependance of which I speak. And it cannot but be attended with transcendent pleasure in that other state, when that knowledge and animadversion shall be clear and perfect: both, as this dependance imports,—A nullifying of self: and magnifying (I may call it omnifying) of God, a making him all in all. As it imports (which it doth most evidently) a *self-annihilation*, a *pure nullifying of self*, it is a continual recognition of my own nothingness, a momently, iterated confession, that my whole being is nothing, but a mere puff of precarious breath, a bubble raised from nothing by the arbitrary *fiat* of the great Creator; reducible, had he so pleased, any moment, to nothing again. These are true and just acknowledgments, and to a well-tempered soul infinitely pleasant, when the state of the case is thoroughly understood (as now it is) and it hath the apprehension clear; how the creation is sustained, how, and upon what terms its own being, life and blessedness are continued to it; that it is, every moment, determinable upon the constancy of the Creator's will, that it is not simply nothing. It is not possible, that any thing should hinder this consideration from being eternally delightful; but that diabolical uncreaturely pride, that is long since banished heaven, and that banished its very subjects thence also. Nothing can suit that temper, but to be a God; to be wholly independent; to be its own sufficiency. The thoughts of living at the will and pleasure of another, are grating; but they are only grating to a proud heart, which, here, hath no place. A soul naturalized to humiliations, accustomed to prostrations, and self-abasements, trained up in acts of mortification, and that was brought to glory, through a continued course and series of self-denial; that ever since it first came to know itself, was wont to depend for every moment's breath, for every glimpse of light, for every fresh influence (I live, yet not I—Gal. 2. 20.) with what pleasure doth it, now, as it were vanish before the Lord! what delight doth it take to diminish itself, and as it were disappear; to contract and shrivel up itself, to shrink even into a point, into a nothing, in the presence of the divine glory; that it may be all in all! Things are now pleasant (to the soul, in its right mind) as they are suitable; as they carry a comeliness and congruity in them: and nothing, now appears more becoming, than such a self-annihilation. The

distances of Creator and creature, of infinite and finite, of a necessary and arbitrary being, of a self-originated and a derived being, of what was from everlasting and what had a beginning; are now better understood than ever. And the soul by how much it is, now, come nearer to God, is more apprehensive of its distance. And such a frame and posture doth, hence, please it best, as doth most fitly correspond thereto. Nothing is so pleasing to it, as to be as it ought. That temper is most grateful that is most proper, and which best agrees with its state. Dependance therefore is greatly pleasing, as it is a self-nullifying thing. And yet it is, in this respect, pleasing, but as a means to a further end. The pleasure that attends it, is higher and more intense, according as it more immediately attains that end, namely —The magnifying and exalting of God: which is the most connatural thing to the holy soul; the most fundamental and deeply impressed law of the new creature. Self gives place, that God may take it; becomes nothing, that he may be all: it vanishes, that his glory may shine the brighter. Dependance gives God his proper glory. It is the peculiar honour and prerogative of a Deity, to have a world of creatures hanging upon it, staying themselves upon it; to be the fulcrum, the centre of a lapsing creation. When this dependance is voluntary and intelligent, it carries in it a more explicit owning and acknowledgment of God. By how much more this is the distinct and actual sense of my soul, Lord, I cannot live but by thee: so much the more openly and plainly do I speak it out, Lord, thou art God alone: thou art the fulness of life and being; The only root and spring of life; The everlasting I AM; The Being of beings.

How unspeakably pleasant, to a holy soul, will such a perpetual agnition or acknowledgment of God be! when the perpetuation of its being, shall be nothing else than a perpetuation of this acknowledgment; when every renewed aspiration, every motion, every pulse of the glorified soul, shall be but a repetition of it; when it shall find, itself, in the eternity of life, that everlasting state of life which it now possesses, to be nothing else than an everlasting testimony that God is God: He is so; for, I am, I live, I act, I have the power to love him; none of which could otherwise be. When amongst the innumerable myriads of the heavenly host, this shall be the mutual, alternate testimony of each to all the rest throughout eternity, will not this be pleasant? When each shall feel continually the fresh illapses and incomes of God, the power and sweetness of divine influences, the enlivening vigour of that vital breath, and find in themselves, thus we live and are sustained: and are yet as se-

cure, touching the continuance of this state of life, as if every one were a God to himself; and did each one possess an entire God-head. When their sensible dependance on him, in their glorified state, shall be his perpetual triumph over all the imaginary deities, the fancied *Numina*, wherewith he was heretofore provoked to jealousy: and he shall now have no rival left, but be acknowledged and known, to be all in all. How pleasant will it then be, as it were, to lose themselves in him! and to be swallowed up in the overcoming sense of his boundless, all-sufficient, every-where flowing fulness! And then add to this; they do by this dependance actually make this fulness of God their own. They are now met in one common principle of life and blessedness, that is sufficient for them all. They no longer live a life of care, are perpetually exempt from solicitous thoughts, which here they could not perfectly attain to in their earthly state. They have nothing to do but to depend: to live upon a present self-sufficient good, which alone is enough to replenish all desires: else it were not self-sufficient. * How can we divide, in our most abstractive thoughts, the highest pleasure, the fullest satisfaction, from this dependance? It is to live at the rate of a God; a God-like life: a living upon immense fulness, as he lives.

Secondly. Subjection; which I place next to dependance, as being of the same allay; the product of impressed sovereignty; as the other, of all-sufficient fulness. Both impressions upon the creature, corresponding to somewhat in God, most in communicably appropriate to him. This is the soul's real and practical acknowledgment of the supreme Majesty; its homage to its Maker; its self-dedication: than which nothing more suits the state of a creature, or the spirit of a saint. And as it is suitable, it is pleasant. It is that by which the blessed soul becomes, in its own sense, a consecrated thing, a devoted thing, sacred to God: its very life and whole being referred and made over to him. With what delightful relishes, what sweet gusts of pleasure is this done! while the soul tastes its own act; approves it with a full ungainsaying judgment; apprehends the condignity and fitness of it; assents to itself herein; and hath the ready suffrage; the harmonious concurrence of all its powers! When the words are no sooner spoken, "Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, honour and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created;" but they are resounded from the penetralia, the *inmost bowels*,

* Το δε αυταρκες τιθεμεν, ο μονεμενον αιρετον ποιει τον βιον, και μηδενος ενδεα: we esteem that to be self-sufficient, which of itself makes life desirable, and leaves no want. Arist. de mor. lib. 1. c. 4.

the most intimate receptacles, and secret chambers of the soul, O Lord, thou art worthy: worthy, that I, and all things should be to thee: worthy, to be the Omega, as thou art the Alpha, the last, as thou art the first; the end, as thou art the beginning of all things; the ocean into which all being shall flow, as the fountain from which it sprang. My whole self, and all my powers, the excellencies now implanted in my being, the privileges of my now glorified state, are all worth nothing to me but for thee; please me only, as they make me fitter for thee. O the pleasure of these sentiments, the joy of such raptures! when the soul shall have no other notion of itself, than of an everlasting sacrifice, always ascending to God in its own flames.

For, this devotedness and subjection speak not, barely an act, but a state; a being to the praise of grace: a living to God. (Rom. 12. 1.) And it is no mean pleasure that the sincere soul finds, in the imperfect beginnings the first essays of this life, the initial breathings of such a spirit, its entrance into this blessed state: when it makes the first tender and present of itself to God (as the apostle expresses it;) when it first begins to esteem itself an hallowed thing; separate and set apart for God: its first act of unfeigned self-resignation; when it tells God from the very heart, "I now give up myself to thee to be thine." Never was marriage-covenant made with such pleasure, with so complacential consent. This quitting claim to ourselves, parting with ourselves upon such terms, to be the Lord's for ever: O the peace, the rest, the acquiescence of spirit that attends it! When the poor soul that was weary of itself, knew not what to do with itself, hath now on the sudden found this way of disposing itself to such an advantage; there is pleasure in this treaty. Even the previous breakings and relentings of the soul towards God are pleasant. But O the pleasure of consent! of yielding ourselves to God, as the apostle's expression is, Rom. 6. 13. When the soul is overcome, and cries out, "Lord, now I resign, I yield, possess now thy own right, I give up myself to thee. That yielding is subjection, self-devoting; in order to future service and obedience, To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, &c. ver. 16. And never did any man enrol himself, as a servant to the greatest prince on earth, with such joy. What pleasure is there in the often iterated recognition of these transactions! in multiplying such bonds upon a man's own soul (though done faintly, while the fear of breaking, checks its joy in taking them on!) When in the uttering of these words, I am thy servant, O Lord: thy servant, the son of thine hand-maid, (Psal. 116. 16.) that is, thy born-servant, (alluding to that custom and law among the Jews,) thy servant devoted to thy fear; (Psal. 119. 38.) a man

finds they fit his spirit, and are aptly expressive of the true sense of his soul, is it not a grateful thing? And how pleasant is a state of life consequent and agreeable to such transactions and covenants with God! When it is meat and drink to do his will! When his zeal eats a man up; and one shall find himself secretly consuming for God! and the vigour of his soul exhaled in his service! Is it not a pleasant thing so to spend and be spent? When one can in a measure find that his will is one with God's, transformed into the divine will: that there is but one common will and interest, and end between him and us; and so, that in serving God we reign with him; in spending ourselves for him, we are perfected in him. Is not this a pleasant life? Some heathens have spoken at such a rate of this kind of life, as might make us wonder and blush. One speaking of a virtuous person, (*Seneca de vita beata*, lib. 15.) saith; *et ut bonus miles feret vulnera*, &c. *he is as a good soldier that bears wounds*, and numbers scars; and at last, smitten through with darts, dying, will love the emperor for whom he falls; he will (saith he) keep in mind that ancient precept, follow God. But there are that complain, cry out and groan, and are compelled by force to do his commands, and hurried into them against their will, and what a madness is it (saith he) to be drawn rather than follow? And presently after subjoins, (Epist. 96.) "We are born in a kingdom; to obey God is liberty. The same person writes in a letter to a friend: "If thou believe me when I most freely discover to thee the most secret fixed temper of my soul, in all things my mind is thus formed: I obey not God so properly as I assent to him. I follow him with all my heart, not because I cannot avoid it." And another, (Epictet. Enchir.) "Lead me to whatsoever I am appointed, and I will follow thee chearfully; but if I refuse, or be unwilling, I shall follow notwithstanding."

A soul cast into such a mould, formed into an obediential subject frame, what sweet peace doth it enjoy! how pleasant rest! Every thing rests most composedly in its proper place. A bone out of joint knows no ease, nor lets the body enjoy any. The creature is not in its place but when it is thus subject, is in this subordination to God. By flying out of this subordination, the world of mankind is become one great disjointed body, full of weary tossings, unacquainted with ease or rest. That soul that is, but in a degree, reduced to that blessed state and temper, is as it were in a new world; so great and happy a change doth it now feel in itself. But when this transformation shall be completed in it; and the will of God shall be no sooner known than rested in with a complacential approbation; and every motion of the first and great mover shall be an efficacious law, ot guide and determine all our motions; and the lesser wheels

shall presently run at the first impulse of the great and master-wheel, without the least rub or hesitation; when the law of sin shall no longer check the law of God; when all the contentions of a rebellious flesh; all the counter-strivings of a perverse, ungovernable heart shall cease for ever; O unconceivable blessedness of this consent, the pleasure of this joyful harmony, this peaceful accord! Obedience, where it is due but from one creature to another, carries its no small advantages with it, and conducibleness to a pleasant unsolicitous life. To be particularly prescribed to, in things, about which our minds would otherwise be tost with various apprehensions, anxious, uncertain thoughts; how great a privilege is it! I cannot forget a pertinent passage of an excellent person of recent memory.* "And (saith he) for pleasure, I shall profess myself so far from doting on that popular idol, liberty, that I hardly think it possible for any kind of obedience to be more painful than an unrestrained liberty. Were there not true bounds of magistrates, of laws, of piety, of reason in the heart, every man would have a fool, I add, a mad tyrant to his master, that would multiply more sorrows, than briars and thorns did to Adam, when he was freed from the bliss at once, and the restraint of paradise; and was sure greater slave in the wilderness, than in the inclosure. Would but the Scripture permit me that kind of idolatry, the binding my faith and obedience to any one visible infallible judge or prince, were it the pope, or the mufti, or the grand tartar; might it be reconcileable with my creed, it would certainly be with my interest, to get presently into that posture of obedience. I should learn so much of the Barbarian ambassadors in Appian, which came on purpose to the Romans to negociate for leave to be their servants. It would be my policy if not my piety; and may now be my wish, though not my faith, that I might never have the trouble to deliberate, to dispute, to doubt, to choose, (those so many profitless uneasinesses) but only the favour to receive commands, and the meekness to obey them. How pleasurable then must obedience be to the perfect will of the blessed God, when our wills shall also be perfectly attempered and conformed thereunto! Therefore are we taught, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. *Perfectissimum in suo genere est mensura reliquorum: what is most perfect in its kind, gives rule to the rest.*

Thirdly. Love. This is an eminent part of the image or likeness of God in his saints: as it is that great attribute of the divine being that is, alone, put to give us a notion of God; God is love. (1 John 4. 8. 16.) This is an excellency (consider it

* Dr. Hammond's sermon of Christ's easy yoke.

whether in its original, or copy) made up of pleasantnesses. All love hath complacency or pleasure in the nature and most formal notion of it. To search for pleasure in love is the same thing as if a man should be solicitous to find water in the sea, or light in the body of the sun. Love to a friend is not without high pleasure, when especially he is actually present, and enjoyed, love to a saint rises higher in nobleness and pleasure, according to the more excellent qualification of its object. It is now in its highest improvement, in both these aspects of it; where whatsoever tends to gratify our nature, whether as human, or holy, will be in its full perfection. Now doth the soul take up its stated dwelling in love, even in God who is love; and as he is love; it is now enclosed with love, encompassed with love, it is conversant in the proper region, and element of love. The love of God is now perfected in it. That love which is not only participated from him, but terminated in him, that perfect love (1 John 4. 18.) casts out tormenting fear: so that here is pleasure without mixture. How naturally will the blessed soul now dissolve and melt into pleasure! It is new framed on purpose for love-embraces and enjoyments. It shall now love like God, as one composed of love. It shall no longer be its complaint and burden, that it cannot retaliate in this kind; that being beloved it cannot love.

Fourthly. Purity. Herein also must the blessed soul resemble God, and delight itself. Every one that hath this hope, (namely, of being hereafter like God, and seeing him as he is) purifieth himself as he is pure. A god-like purity is intimately connected with the expectation of future blessedness, much more with the fruition. "Blessed are the pure in heart; besides the reason there annexed, for they shall see God," (which is to be considered under the other head, the pleasure unto which this likeness disposes) that proposition carries its own reason in itself. It is an incomparable pleasure that purity carries in its own nature: as sin hath in its very nature, besides its consequent guilt and sorrow, trouble and torment beyond expression. Whatsoever defiles, doth also disturb: nor do any but pure pleasures deserve the name. *An Epicurus himself will tell us, *there cannot be pleasure without wisdom, honesty and righteousness.* It is least of all possible there should, when once a person shall have a right knowledge of himself, and (which is the moral impurity whereof we speak) the filthiness of sin. I doubt not but much of the torment of hell, will consist in those

* Whose doctrine, as to this matter of pleasure, is not so much to be blamed as his practice, if both be rightly represented to us.
(Ex. Cicer. 1. de Fin.) Οὐκ ἐστὶν ἡδέως ζῆν ἄνευ τοῦ φρονίμως καὶ δικαίως

too late, and despairing self-lothings, those sickly resentments, the impure wretches will be possessed with, when they see what hideous deformed monsters their own wickedness hath made them. Here the gratifications of sense that attend it, bribe and seduce their judgments into another estimate of sin: but then it shall be no longer thought of under the more favourable notion of a γλυκυπικρον they shall taste nothing but the gall and wormwood. It is certainly no improbable thing, but that reason being now so fully rectified and undeceived, vizors torn off, and things now appearing in their own likeness; so much will be seen, and apprehended of the intrinsic evil and malignity of their vitiated natures, as will serve for the matter of further torment; while yet such a sight can do no more to a change of their temper, than the devil's faith doth to theirs. Such sights being accompanied with their no-hope of ever attaining a better state, do therefore no way tend to mollify or demulce their spirits, but to increase their rage and torment. It is however out of question, that the purity of heaven will infinitely enhance the pleasure of it: for it is more certain, the intrinsical goodness of holiness (which term I need not among these instances; in as much as the thing admits not of one entire notion, but lies partly under this head, partly under the second, that of devotedness to God) will be fully understood in heaven, than the intrinsical evil of sin in hell: and when it is understood, will it not effect? will it not please? Even here, how pleasing are things to the pure (but in degree so) that participate of the divine purity! Thy word is very pure, saith the psalmist, Psal. 119. 140. therefore thy servant loveth it. Under this notion do holy ones take pleasure in each other; because they see somewhat of the divine likeness, their Father's image, in one another: will it not be much more pleasing to find it each one perfect in himself? to feel the ease and peace, and rest, that naturally goes with it? A man that hath any love of cleanliness, if casually plunged into the mire, he knows not what to do with himself, he fancies his own clothes to abhor him (as Job rhetorically speaks, Job. 9.) so doth as natural a pleasure attend purity: it hath it even in itself. The words of the pure (saith the wise-man) are pleasant words (Prov. 15. 20.) words of pleasantnesses it might be read. That pure breath that goes from him, is not without a certain pleasurableness accompanying it. And if so to another, much more to himself, especially when every thing corresponds; and (as the expression is) he finds himself clean throughout.

Fifthly. Liberty, another part of the divine likeness, wherein we are to imitate God, cannot but be an unspeakable satisfaction. Supposing such a state of the notion of liberty as may render it really a perfection: which otherwise it would be a wick-

edness to impute to God, and an impossibility to partake from him. I here speak of the moral liberty of a saint, as such; not of the natural liberty of a man, as a man: and of the liberty consummate of saints in glory; not of the inchoate, imperfect liberty of saints on earth. And therefore the intricate controversies about the liberty of the human will, lie out of our way, and need not give us any trouble. It is out of question that this liberty consists not (what ever may be said of any other) in an equal propension to good or evil; nor in the will's independency on the practical understanding; nor in a various uncertain mutability, or inconstancy; nor is it such as is opposed to all necessity; it is not a liberty from the government of God, * nor from a determination to the simply best, and most eligible objects. But it is a liberty from the servitude of sin, from the seduction of a misguided judgment; and the allurement of any insnaring forbidden object: consisting in an abounded amplitude and enlargedness of soul towards God, and indetermination to any inferior good: resulting from an entire subjection to the divine will, a submission to the order of God, and steady adherence to him. And unto which the many descriptions and elogies agree most indisputably, which from sundry authors are congested together by Gibieuf, || in that ingenious tractate of liberty. As that, he is free that lives as he will, (from Cicero insisted on by S. Aug. de Civit. Dei lib. 14. c. 25.) that is who neither wishes any thing, nor fears any thing; who in all things acquiesces in the will of God; who minds nothing but his own things, and accounts nothing his own but God; who favours nothing but God; who is moved only by the will of God. Again; he is free, that cannot be hindered, being willing, nor forced being unwilling (from Epictetus) that is who hath always his will; as having perfectly subjected it to the will of God, as the same author explains himself. Again; he is free that is master of himself (from the Civilians) that is (as that liberty respects the spirit of a man) that hath a mind independent on any thing foreign and alien to himself. That only follows God (from Philo Judeus); that lives according to his own reason (from Aris-

* Which is a no more desirable state than that which, I remember, the historian tells us was the condition of the Armenians; who having cast off the government that was over them, became Inserti, solutique et magis sine Domino quam in libertate. Unsettled licentious, and rather in a state of anarchy than of freedom.

|| Libertas nostra non est subjectio ad Deum formaliter, sed amplitudo consequens eam. Our liberty consists formally not in our subjection unto God but in that enlargedness of soul which is its result. Gibieuf. De libert. Dei at creaturae lib. 1. c. 32.

rotle :) with many more of like import; that alone does fully and perfectly suit that state of liberty the blessed soul shall hereafter eternally enjoy; as that author often acknowledges.

This is "the glorious liberty of the children of God; the liberty wherewith the Son makes free. Liberty indeed, measured and regulated by the royal law of liberty, and which is perfected only in a perfect conformity thereto. There is a most servile * liberty, a being free from righteousness, †which under that specious name and show, enslaves a man to corruption :‡ and there is as free a service, by which a man is still the more free, by how much the more he serves, and is subject to his superior's will, and governing influences; and by how much the less possible it is, he should swerve therefrom ||. The nearest approaches therefore of the soul to God; its most intimate union with him, and entire subjection to him in its glorified state, makes its liberty consummate, Now is its deliverance complete, its bands are fallen off; it is perfectly disentangled from all the snares of death, in which it was formerly held; it is under no restraints, oppressed by no weights, held down by no elogs; it hath the free exercise of all its powers; hath every faculty and affection at command. How unconceivable a pleasure is this! With what delight doth the poor prisoner entertain himself, when his manacles and fetters are knocked off! when he is enlarged from his loathsome dungeon, and the house of his bondage; breathes in a free air; can dispose of himself, and walk at liberty whither he will! The bird escaped from his cage, or freed from his line and stone, that resisted its vain and too feeble strugglings before; how pleasantly doth it range! with what joy doth it clap its wings, and take its flight! A faint emblem of

* Quam invexere sibi, adjuvant servitutem. Et sunt, quodammodo, propriâ Libertate captivi. They promote the servitude which they have brought upon themselves. And they are in a sense slaves to their liberty. (Boeth. ex Gib.) Nectit quâ valeat trahi catenam, He forges his own chain. Sen. Trag.

|| Liberior quo divinæ gratiæ subjectior. Primum Liberum arbitrium, quod homini datum est, quando primum creatus est rectus, potuit non peccare; sed potuit et peccare. Hoc autem novissimum eò potentius erit, quo peccare non potuit. The more subject to divine grace the more free. That original free will which was given to man when he was created in rectitude gave the power of avoiding sin; but it also gave the power of committing it: whereas that which is now bestowed is inferior to the former as it includes the possibility of sinning. Aug. de Civitat. Dei lib. 22. c. 30.

† Rom. 6 20.

‡ 2 Pet. 2.

the joy, wherewith that pleasant cheerful note shall one day be sung and chanted forth, Our soul is escaped, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and we are escaped. There is now no place for such a complaint, I would, but I cannot; I would turn my thoughts to glorious objects, but I cannot. The blessed soul feels itself free from all confinement: nothing resists its will, as its will doth never resist the will of God. It knows no limits, no restraints; is not tied up to this or that particular good; but expatiates freely in the immense universal all-comprehending goodness of God himself. And this liberty is the perfect image and likeness of the liberty of

* Libertas nostra inhæret divinæ, ut exemplari et in perpetua ejus imitatione versatur, sive ortum, sive progressum, sive consummationem ejus intuearis: Libertas nostra, in ortu, est capacitas Dei. In progressu, libertas res est longe clarior: progressus enim attenditur penes accessum hominis ad Deum; qui quidem non locali propinquitate, sed imitatione, et assimilatione constat, et ea utique imitatione et assimilatione secundum quam, sicut Deus est sublimis, excelsus seipso ita homo est sublimis, et excelsus Deo, et altitudo ejus Deus est, ut inquit D. Augustinus. Our liberty follows the liberty of God as its pattern, and consists in the perpetual imitation of him, whether you consider its rise, or progress, or consummation. Our liberty in its rise is the power of God: in its progress, liberty is a thing greatly increasing in brightness; for that progress is according to the nearer approach of man to God, which consists not in local nearness, but in imitation and conformity to him, so that as God is sublime and excellent in himself; so man is sublime and excellent in God: and God is his exaltation as saith Augustine. Consummatio denique libertatis est, cum homo in Deum, felicissimo gloriæ cœlestis statu transformatur; et Deus omnia illi esse incipit. Qui quidem postremus status, eo differt a priore;—quippe homo tum non modo inalligatus est creaturis, sed nec circa illas negotiatur, etiam referendo in finem—nec in creaturis se infundit, nec per illas procedit, ut faciebat cum esset, viator: sed in solo Deo, et conquiescit et effundid se placidissime, et motus ejus, cum sit ad presentissimum et conjunctissimum bonum, similior est quieti quam motui. The consummation of liberty therefore is when man is transformed into the likeness of God in the happy state of celestial glory, and when God begins to be his all. Which last state is so different from the preceding, because then man is not only unfettered from the creatures, but is not at all concerned about them, even with respect to his final object, he neither immerges himself in them nor falls by them, as was the case when he was a pilgrim: but in God alone he both rests and pours himself out with the greatest tranquility; and the very motion of his soul as it is towards a most immediately and perfect good is more like rest than motion.

God, especially in its consummate state. In its progress towards it, it increases as the soul draws nearer to God: which nearer approach is not in respect of place or local nearness, but likeness and conformity to him; in respect whereof, as God is most sublime and excellent in himself, so is it in him. Its consummate liberty is, when it is so fully transformed into that likeness of God, as that he is all to it, as to himself: so that as he s an infinite satisfaction to himself; his likeness in this respect, is the very satisfaction itself of the blessed soul.

Sixthly. Tranquillity. This also is an eminent part of that assimilation to God, wherein the blessedness of the holy soul must be understood to lie: a perfect composure, a perpetual and everlasting calm, an eternal vacancy from all unquietness or perturbation. Nothing can be supposed more inseparably agreeing to the nature of God than this: whom scripture witnesses to be without variableness or shadow of change. There can be no commotion without mutation, nor can the least mutation have place in a perfectly simple and uncompounded nature: whence even pagan reason hath been wont to attribute the most undisturbed and unalterable tranquillity to the nature of God. Balaam knew it was incompatible to him to lie, or repent. And (supposing him to speak this from a present inspiration) it is their common doctrine concerning God. *Omnes turbulæ tempestates quæ procul a Deorum cœlestium tranquiltitate exulant, &c.* (*Apuleius de Deo Socratis.*) *Any, the least troubles and tempests are far exiled from the tranquility of God; for all the inhabitants of heaven do ever enjoy the same stable tenour, even an eternal equality of mind,* And a little after speaking of God, saith he, it is neither possible he should be moved by the force of another, for nothing is stronger than God: nor of his own accord, for nothing is more perfect than God.'' And whereas there is somewhat that is mutable, and subject to change; somewhat that is stable and fixed. Another saith— Ἐν ποτερα των φυσεων τȣτων τον θεον τακτεον; αρα ουκ εν ςασιμωτερα κα εδραιμοτερα, και απηλλαγμεν η τȣ ρευματος τȣτȣ, &c. *In which of those natures shall we place God? must we not in that which is more stable and fixed, and free from this fluidness and mutability? For what is there among all beings, that can be stable or consist, if God do not by his own touch stay and sustain the nature of it?* (Max. Tyr.) dessert. 1.

Hence it is made a piece of deformity, of likeness to God, by another who tells his friend, *Quod desideras autem magnum, summum est. Deoque vicinum; non concuti. It is a high and great thing which thou desirest, and even bordering upon a Deity; not to be moved.* (*Sen. de tranquil. Animi.*) Yea, so hath this doctrine been insisted on by them, that (while

other divine perfections have been less understood,) it hath occasioned the stoical assertion of fatality to be introduced on the one hand, and the Epicurean negation of providence on the other; lest any thing should be admitted that might seem repugnant to the tranquillity of their Numina. But we know that our God doth whatsoever pleaseth him, both in heaven and earth; and that he doth all according to the wise counsel of his holy will; freely, not fatally, upon the eternal prevision, and foresight of all circumstances and events: so that nothing can occur that is new to him, nothing that he knows not how to improve to good; or that can therefore infer any alteration of his counsels, or occasion to him the least perturbation or disquiet in reference to them.

Holy souls begin herein to imitate him, as soon as they first give themselves up to his wise and gracious conduct. It is enough that he is wise for himself and them. Their hearts safely trust in him. They commit themselves with unsolicitous confidence, to his guidance; knowing he cannot himself be mis-led, and that he will not mis-lead them: as Abraham followed him, not knowing whither he went. And thus, by faith, they enter into his rest. They do now in their present state, only enter into it, or hover about the borders: their future assimilation to God in this, gives them a stated settlement of spirit in this rest. They before did owe their tranquillity to their faith; now to their actual fruition. Their former acquiescency, and sedate temper was hence, that they believed God would deal well with them at last; their present, for that he hath done so. Those words have now, their fullest sense (both as to the rest itself which they mention; and the season of it) Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. Psal. 116. 7. The occasions of trouble, and a passive temper of spirit are ceased together. There is now no fear without, nor terror within. The rage of the world is now allayed, it storms no longer. Reproach and persecution have found a period. There is no more dragging before tribunals, nor haling into prisons; no more running into dens and deserts; or wandering to and fro in sheepskins, and goatskins. And with the cessation of the external occasions of trouble, the inward dispositions thereto are also ceased. All infirmities of spirit, tumultuating passions, unmortified corruptions, doubts, or imperfect knowledge of the love of God, are altogether vanished, and done away for ever. And indeed, that perfect cure wrought within, is the soul's great security from all future disquiet. A well tempered spirit hath been wont strangely to preserve its own peace in this unquiet world. Philosophy hath boasted much in this kind; and Christianity performed more. The philosophical

(γαλυνη, or) calmness of mind, is not without its excellency and praise: "That stable settlement and fixedness of spirit, that ευσθυμια (as the moralist tells us, it was wont to be termed among the Grecians, and which he calls tranquillity;) when the mind is always equal, and goes a smooth, even course, is propitious to itself, and beholds the things that concern it with pleasure, and interrupts not this joy, but remains in a placid state, never at any time exalting or depressing itself." But how far doth the Christian peace surpass it! (Sen. de tranquil. anim.) that peace which passeth all understanding; (Phil. 4. 7.) that amidst surrounding dangers, enables the holy soul to say (without a proud boast) None of all these things move me: (Act. 20. 24.) the peace that immediately results from that faith which unites the soul with God, and fixes it upon him as its firm basis: when it is kept in perfect peace, by being stayed upon him, because it trusts in him: when the heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord: filled full of joy and peace, or of joyous peace, (by an εν δια δυοιν) in believing Isa. 26. 3. Psal. 112. 7. Rom. 15. 13. And if philosophy and (which far transcends it) christianity, reason and faith, have that statique power, can so compose the soul, and reduce it to so quiet a consistency in the midst of storms and tempests: how perfect and contentful a repose, will the immediate vision, and enjoyment of God afford it, in that serene and peaceful region, where it shall dwell for ever, free from any molestation from without, or principle of disrest within!

CHAP. IX.

(2.) The pleasure arising from knowing, or considering ourselves to be like God from considering it, [1.] Absolutely, [2.] Comparatively, or respectively; First, To the former state of the soul, Secondly. To the state of lost souls, Thirdly. To its pattern, Fourthly. To the way of accomplishment, Fifthly. To the soul's own expectations. Sixthly. To what it secures. 2. The pleasure whereto it disposes! (1.) Of Union (2.) Communion:—a comparison of this righteousness, with this blessedness.

(2.) HERE is also to be considered, the pleasure and satisfaction involved in this assimilation to God, as it is known or reflected on, or that arises from the *cognosci* of this likeness. We have hitherto discoursed of the pleasure of being like God, as that is apprehended by a spiritual sensation, a feeling of that inward rectitude, that happy pleasure of souls now perfectly restored: we have yet to consider a further pleasure, which accrues from the soul's animadversion upon itself, its contemplating itself thus happily transformed. And though that very sensation be not without some animadversion (as indeed no sensible perception can be performed without it,) yet we must conceive a consequent animadversion, which is much more explicit and distinct; and which therefore yields a very great addition of satisfaction and delight: as when the blessed soul shall turn its eye upon itself, and designedly compose and set itself to consider its present state and frame; the consideration it shall now have of itself, and this likeness impressed upon it, may be either absolute, or comparative and respective.

[1.] Absolute. How pleasing a spectacle will this be, when the glorified soul shall now intentively behold its own glorious frame? when it shall dwell in the contemplation of itself? view itself round on every part, turn its eye from glory to glory, from beauty to beauty, from one excellency to another: and trace over the whole draught of this image, this so exquisite piece of divine workmanship, drawn out in its full perfection upon itself? when the glorified eye, and divinely enlightened and in-

spirited mind, shall apply itself to criticise, and make a judgment upon every several lineament, every touch and stroke; shall stay itself, and scrupulously insist upon every part; view at leisure every character of glory the blessed God hath instamped upon it; how will this likeness now satisfy! And that expression of the blessed apostle (taken notice of upon some other occasion formerly) "the glory to be revealed in us," seems to import in it a reference to such a self-intuition. What serves revelation for, but in order to vision? what is it, but an exposing things to view? And what is revealed in us, is chiefly exposed to our own view. All the time, from the soul's first conversion till now, God hath been as it were at work upon it, (He that hath wrought us to, &c. 2. Cor. 5. 5.) hath been labouring it, shaping it, polishing it, spreading his own glory upon it, inlaying, enamelling it with glory: now at last, the whole work is revealed, the curtain is drawn aside, the blessed soul awakes. "Come now," saith God, "behold my work, see what I have done upon thee, let my work now see the light; I dare expose it to the censure of the most curious eye, let thine own have the pleasure of beholding it." It was a work carried on in a mystery, secretly wrought (as in the lower parts of the earth, as we alluded before) by a spirit that came and went no man could tell how. Besides, that in the general only, we knew we should be like him, it did not yet appear what we should be; now it appears: there is a revelation of this glory. O the ravishing pleasure of its first appearance! and it will be a glory always fresh and flourishing, (as Job's expression is, "my glory was fresh in me") and will afford a fresh, undecaying pleasure for ever.

[2.] The blessed soul may also be supposed to have a comparative and respective consideration of the impressed glory. That is, so as to compare it with, and refer it to several things that may come into consideration with it: and may so heighten its own delight in the contemplation thereof.

First. If we consider this impression of glory, in reference to its former loathsome deformities that were upon it, and which are now vanished and gone: how unconceivable a pleasure will arise from this comparison! When the soul shall consider at once what it is, and what once it was, and thus bethink itself: I that did sometimes bear the accursed image of the prince of darkness, do now represent and partake of the holy, pure nature of the Father of lights: I was a mere chaos, a hideous heap of deformity, confusion and darkness, but he that made light to shine out of darkness, shined into me, to give the knowledge of the light of his own glory in the face of Jesus Christ; (2. Cor. 4. 6.) and since, made my way as the shining light, shi-

ning brighter and brighter unto this perfect day. Prov. 4. 18. I was a habitation for dragons, a cage of noisome lusts, that as serpents and vipers, were winding to and fro through all my faculties and powers, and preying upon my very vitals; then was I hateful to God, and a hater of him; sin and vanity had all my heart; the charming invitations, and allurements of grace, were as music to a dead man; to think a serious thought of God, or breathe forth an affectionate desire after him, was as much against my heart, as to pluck out mine own eyes, or offer violence to mine own life; after I began to live the spiritual, new life, how slow and faint was my progress and tendency towards perfection! how indisposed did I find myself to the proper actions of that life; to go about any holy, spiritual work, was too often, as to climb a hill, or strive against the stream; or as an attempt to fly without wings. I have sometimes said to my heart, Come, now let us go pray, love God, think of heaven; but O how listless to these things! how lifeless in them, impressions made, how quickly lost! gracious frames, how soon wrought off and gone! characters of glory razed out, and overspread with earth and dirt! divine comeliness hath now at length made me perfect: the glory of God doth now inclothe me; they are his ornaments I now wear. He hath made me, who lately lay among the pots, as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold; he hath put another nature into me, the true likeness of his own holy divine nature; he hath now perfectly mastered and wrought out the enmity of my heart against him: now to be with God is my very element: loving, admiring, praising him, are as natural as breathing once was. I am all spirit and life, I feel myself disburdened, and unclogged of all the heavy, oppressive weights that hung upon me: no body of death doth now incumber me, no deadness of heart, no coldness of love, no drowsy sloth, no averseness from God, no earthly mind, no sensual inclinations or affections, no sinful divisions of heart between God and creatures: he hath now the whole of me: I enjoy and delight in none but him: O blessed change! O happy day!

Secondly. If in contemplating itself, clothed with this likeness, it respects the state of damned souls, what transports must that occasion! what ravishing resentments! when it compares human nature in its highest perfection, with the same nature in its utmost depravation, (an unspeakably more unequal comparison than that would be, of the most amiable lovely person, flourishing in the prime of youthful strength and beauty, with a putrified rotten carcass, deformed by the corruption of a loathsome grave,) when glorified spirits shall make such a reflection as this: Lo, here we shine in the glorious brightness

of the divine image; and behold yonder deformed accursed souls: they were as capable of this glory as we; had the same nature with us, the same reason, the same intellectual faculties and powers; but what monsters are they now become? They eternally hate the eternal excellency. Sin and death are finished upon them. They have each of them a hell of horror and and wickedness in itself. Whence is this amazing difference! Though this cannot but be an awful wonder, it cannot also but be tempered with pleasure and joy.

Thirdly. We may suppose this likeness to be considered in reference to its pattern, and in comparison therewith; which will then be another way of heightening the pleasure that shall arise thence. Such a frame and constitution of spirit is full of delights in itself: but when it shall be referred to its original, and the correspondency between the one and the other be observed and viewed; how exactly they accord, and answer each other, as face doth face in the water; this cannot still but add pleasure to pleasure, one delight to another. When the blessed soul shall interchangeably turn its eye to God, and itself; and consider the agreement of glory to glory; the several derived excellencies to the original: He is wise, and so am I; holy, and so am I: I am now made perfect as my heavenly Father is; this gives a new relish to the former pleasure. How will this likeness please under that notion, as it is his; a likeness to him! O the accent that will be put upon those appropriative words to be made partakers of his holiness, and of the divine nature! Personal excellencies in themselves considered, cannot be reflected on, but with some pleasure; but to the ingenuity of a child, how especially grateful will it be, to observe in itself such and such graceful deportments, wherein it naturally imitates its father! So he was wont to speak, and act, and demean himself. How natural is it unto love to affect and aim at the imitation of the person loved! So natural it must be to take complacency therein; when we have hit our mark, and achieved our design. The pursuits and attainments of love are proportionable and correspondent each to other. And what heart can compass the greatness of this thought, to be made like God! Lord, was there no lower pattern than thyself, thy glorious blessed self, according to which to form a worm! This cannot want its due resentments in a glorified state.

Fourthly. This transformation of the blessed soul into the likeness of God, may be viewed by it, in reference to the way of accomplishment: as an end, brought about by so amazing stupendous means: which will certainly be a pleasing contemplation. When it reflects on the method and course insisted on, for bringing this matter to pass; views over the work of redemption

in its tendency to this end, the restoring God's image in souls; (Phil. 2. 7) considers Christ manifested to us, in order to his being revealed and formed in us: that God was made in the likeness of man, to make men after the likeness of God; that he partook with us of the human nature, that we might with him partake of the divine; that he assumed our flesh, in order to impart to us his Spirit: when it shall be considered, for this end had we so many great and precious promises; (2 Pet. 1. 4.) for this end did the glory of the Lord shine upon us through the glass of the gospel; (2 Cor. 3. 18.) that we might be made partakers, &c. that we might be changed, &c. Yea, when it shall be called to mind, (though it be far from following hence, that this is the only or principal way, wherein the life and death of Christ have influence, in order to our eternal happiness) that our Lord Jesus lived for this end, that we might learn so to walk, as he also walked; that he died that we might be conformed to his death; that he rose again that we might with him attain the resurrection of the dead; that he was in us the hope of glory, that he might be in us (that is, the same image that bears his name) our final consummate glory itself also: with what pleasure will these harmonious congruities, these apt correspondencies, be looked into at last! Now may the glorified saint say, I here see the end the Lord Jesus came into the world for, I see for what he was lifted up, made a spectacle; that he might be a transforming one: what the effusions of his Spirit were for; why it is so earnestly strove with my wayward heart. I now behold in my own soul, the fruit of the travail of his soul. This was the project of redeeming love, the design of all powerful gospel-grace. Glorious achievement! blessed end of that great and notable undertaking! happy issue of that high design!

Fifthly. With a reference to all their own expectations and endeavours. When it shall be considered by a saint in glory; the attainment of this perfect likeness to God, was the utmost mark of all my designs and aims; the term of all my hopes and desires: this is that I longed and laboured for; that which I prayed and waited for; which I so earnestly breathed after, and restlessly pursued: it was but to recover the defacedness of God: to be again made like him, as once I was. Now I have attained my end; I have the fruit of all my labour and travels; I see now the truth of those (often) encouraging words, blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Be not weary in well-doing, for ye shall reap, if ye faint not: what would I once have given for a steady, abiding frame of holiness, for a heart constantly bent and biassed toward God; constantly serious, constantly tender, lively, watchful,

heavenly, spiritual, meek, humble, cheerful, self-denying? how have I cried and striven for this, to get such a heart! such a temper of spirit! how have I pleaded with God and my own soul, in order hereto! how often over have I spread this desire before the searcher and judge of hearts; Turn me out of all my worldly comforts, so thou give me but such a heart; let me spend my days in a prison, or a desert, so I have but such a heart; I refuse no reproaches, no losses, no tortures, may I but have such a heart? How hath my soul been sometimes ravished with the very thoughts of such a temper of spirit, as hath appeared amiable in my eye, but I could not attain? and what a torture again hath it been that I could not? What grievance in all the world, in all the days of my vanity, did I ever find comparable to this; to be able to frame to myself by Scripture, and rational light and rules, the notion and idea of an excellent temper of spirit; and then to behold it, to have it in view, and not be able to reach it, to possess my soul of it? What indignation have I sometimes conceived against mine own soul, when I have found it wandering, and could not reduce it; hovering, and could not fix it; dead, and could not quicken it; low, and could not raise it? How earnestly have I expected this blessed day, when all those distempers should be perfectly healed, and my soul recover a healthy, lively, spiritual frame? What fresh ebullitions of joy will here be, when all former desires, hopes, endeavours are crowned with success and fruit! This joy is the joy of harvest. They that have sown in tears, do now reap in joy. They that went out weeping, bearing precious seed; now with rejoicing, bring their sheaves with them. Psal. 126. 6.

Sixthly. In reference to what this impressed likeness shall for ever secure to it: an everlasting amity and friendship with God; —that *it* shall never sin, nor *he* ever frown more.—That it shall sin no more. The perfected image of God in it, is its security for this: for it is holy throughout; in every point conformed to his nature and will; there remains in it nothing contrary to him. It may therefore certainly conclude, it shall never be liable to the danger of doing any thing, but what is good in his sight: and what solace will the blessed soul find in this! If now an angel from heaven should assure it, that from such an hour it should sin no more, the world would not be big enough to hold such a soul. It hath now escaped the deadliest of dangers, the worst of deaths, (and which even in its present state, upon more deliberate calmer thoughts it accounts so) the sting of death, the very deadliness of death; the hell of hell itself. The deliverance is now complete which cannot but end in delight and praise.—That God can never frown more. This it is hence also assured of. How can he but take perfect, everlasting complacency in his own perfect likeness and image; and behold

with pleasure his glorious workmanship, now never liable to impairment or decay? How pleasant a thought is this, "The blessed God never beholds me but with delight! I shall always behold his serene countenance, his amiable face never covered with any clouds, never darkened with any frown! I shall now have cause to complain no more; my God is a stranger to me, he conceals himself, I cannot see his face; lo, he is encompassed with clouds and darkness, or with flames and terrors." These occasions are for ever ceased. God sees no cause, either to behold the blessed soul with displeasure, or with displeasure to avert from it, and turn off his eye. And will not this eternally satisfy! When God himself is so well pleased, shall not we!

2. The pleasure it disposes to. Besides that the inbeing and knowledge of this likeness are so satisfying; it disposes, and is the soul's qualification for a yet further pleasure:—that of closest union, and most inward communion with the blessed God.

(1.) Union: which (what it is more than relation) is not till now complete. Besides relation it must needs import presence: not physical, or local; for so nothing can be nearer God than it is: but moral and cordial, by which the holy soul with will and affections, guided by rectified reason and judgment, closes with, and embraces him; and he also upon wise forelaid counsel, and with infinite delight and love embraceth it: so friends are said to be one (besides their relation as friends) by a union of hearts. A union between God and the creature, as to kind and nature higher than this, and lower than hypostatical or personal union, I understand not, and therefore say nothing of it. I would fain know what the *Tertium* shall be, resulting from the physical union, some speak of.

But as to the union here mentioned: as, till the image of God be perfected, it is not completed; so it cannot but be perfect then. When the soul is perfectly formed according to God's own heart, and fully participates the divine likeness, is perfectly like him; that likeness cannot but infer the most intimate union that two such natures can admit: that is, (for nature) a love-union; such as that which our Saviour mentions, and prays to the Father to perfect, between themselves and all believers, and among believers, mutually with one another. Many much trouble themselves about this scripture; (John 17. 21.) but sure that can be no other than a love-union. For, it is such a union as christians are capable of among themselves; for surely he would never pray that they might be one with a union whereof they are not capable. It is such a union as may be made visible to the world. Whence it is an obvious corollary, that the union between the Father and the Son, there spo-

ken of as the pattern of this, is not their union or oneness in essence (though it be a most acknowledged thing, that there is such an essential union between them;) for, who can conceive that saints should be one among themselves, and with the Father and the Son, with such a union as the Father and the Son are one themselves, if the essential union between Father and Son were the union here spoken of; but the exemplary or patern-union, here mentioned between the Father and Son, is but a union in mind, in love, in design, and interest; wherein he prays, that saints on earth might visibly be one with them also, that the world might believe, &c. It is yet a rich pleasure that springs up to glorified saints from that love-union (now perfected) between the blessed God and them. It is mentioned and shadowed in Scripture, under the name and notion of marriage-union; in which the greatest mutual complacency is always supposed a necessary ingredient. To be thus joined to the Lord, and made as it were one spirit with him; (1 Cor. 6. 17.) for the eternal God to cleave in love to a nothing-creature, as his likeness upon it engages him to do; is this no pleasure, or a mean one?

(2.) Communion: unto which that union is fundamental, and introductive; and which follows it upon the same ground, from a natural propensity of like to like. There is nothing now to hinder God and the holy soul of the most inward fruitions and enjoyments; no animosity, no strangeness, no unsuitableness on either part. Here the glorified spirits of the just have liberty to solace themselves amidst the rivers of pleasure at God's own right hand, without check or restraint. They are pure, and these pure. They touch nothing that can defile, they defile nothing they can touch. They are not now forbidden the nearest approaches to the *once* inaccessible Majesty; there is no holy of holies into which they may not enter, no door locked up against them. They may have free admission into the innermost secret of the divine presence, and pour forth themselves in the most liberal effusions of love and joy: as they must be the eternal subject of those infinitely richer communications from God, even of immense and boundless love and goodness. Do not debase this pleasure by low thoughts, nor frame too daring, positive apprehensions of it. It is yet a secret to us. The eternal converses of the King of glory with glorified spirits, are only known to himself and them. That expression (which we so often meet in our way) "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," seems left on purpose to check a too curious and prying inquisitiveness into these unrevealed things. The great God will have his reserves of glory, of love, of pleasure for that future state. Let him alone awhile, with those who are already re-

ceived into those mansions of glory, those everlasting habitations: he will find a time for those that are yet pilgrims and wandering exiles, to ascend and enter too. In the mean time, what we know of this communion may be gathered up into this general account, the reciprocation of loves; the flowing and reflowing of everlasting love, between the blessed soul and its infinitely blessed God; its egress towards him, his illapses into it. Unto such pleasure doth this likeness dispose and qualify: you can no way consider it, but it appears a most pleasurable, satisfying thing.

Thus far have we shown the qualification for this blessedness, and the nature of it; What it prerequires, and wherein it lies: and how highly congruous it is, that the former of these should be made a prerequisite to the latter, will sufficiently appear to any one that shall, in his own thoughts, compare this righteousness and this blessedness together. He will indeed plainly see, that the natural state of the case and habitude of these, each to other, make this connexion unalterable and eternal; so as that it must needs be simply impossible, to be thus blessed without being thus righteous. For what is this righteousness other than this blessedness began, the seed and principle of it? And that with as exact proportion (or rather sameness of nature) as is between the grain sown and reaped; which is more than intimated in that of the apostle, Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall be also reap: (Gal. 6.7. 8.) For he that soweth, to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; (there is the same proportion too) but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting: which though it be spoken to a particular case, is yet spoken from a general rule and reason applicable a great deal further. And as some conceive (and is undertaken to be demonstrated) that the seeds of things are not virtually only, but actually and formally the very things themselves: (*Dr. Harv. de Ovo.*) so is it here also. The very parts of this blessedness are discernible in this righteousness, the future vision of God in present knowledge of him: for this knowledge is a real initial part of righteousness; the rectitude of the mind and apprehensions concerning God, consisting in conformity to his revelation of himself: present holiness, including also the future assimilation to God: and the contentment and peace that attends it, the consequent satisfaction in glory. But as in glory, the impression of the divine likeness, is that which vision subserves, and whence satisfaction results; so is it here (visibly) the main thing also. The end and design of the Gospel-revelation, * of

* Πως ο υν γινομεθα καθ ομοιωσιν; δια των ευαγγελιων. Τι εις χρισιανισμος; θεε ομοιωσις: καλα το ενδεχομενον ανθρωπε φυσει; how then

whole Christianity (I mean systematically considered,) of all Evangelical doctrines and knowledge, is to restore God's likeness and image; from whence joy and peace result of course, when once the gospel is believed. The gospel is the instrument of impressing God's likeness, in order whereunto it must be understood, and received into the mind. Being so, the impression upon the heart and life is Christianity, habitual and practical, whereupon joy and pleasure (the belief or thorough reception of the gospel thus intervening) do necessarily ensue, Rom. 15. 13. So aptly is the only way or method of seeing God's face, so as to be satisfied with his likeness, said to be, in or through righteousness.

CHAP. X.

Having considered the qualified subject, and the nature of this blessedness we come now as proposed in head of chapter II. to consider, *Thirdly.* The season of this satisfaction, which is twofold; at death, and at the resurrection. 1. The former spoken to; wherein is shown, (1.) That this life is to the soul (even of a saint) but as a sleep: (2.) That at death it awakes. 2. As to the latter; that there is a considerable accession to its happiness at the resurrection.

Thirdly. THE season of this blessedness, comes next to be considered; which (as the words "when I awake," have been concluded here to import) must, in the general, be stated, beyond the time of this present life. Holy souls are here truly blessed, not perfectly; or their present blessedness is perfect only in nature and kind, not in degree. It is, in this respect, as far short of perfection as their holiness is. Their hunger and thirst are present, their being filled is yet future.

are we made after the likeness of God? By the gospel. What is Christianity? The likeness of God, so far as the nature of man admits of it. Greg. Nyss. inverba Faciamus hominem, &c. Gregory Nyssen on the words "Let us make man," &c. Orat. 1.

The experience of saints in their best state on earth, their desires, their hopes, their sighs and groans do sufficiently witness they are not satisfied; or if they be in point of security, they are not in point of enjoyment. The completion of this blessedness is reserved to a better state, as its being the end of their way, their rest from their labours, the reward of their work, (Matt. 5. 6.) doth import and require. Therefore many scriptures that speak of their present rest, peace, repose, satisfaction, must be understood in a comparative, not the absolute highest sense. More particularly, in that other state, the season of their blessedness is twofold; or there are two terms from whence (in respect of some gradual or modal diversificatiions) it may be said severally to commence, or bear date, namely—The time of their entrance upon a blessed immortality, when they shall have laid down their earthly bodies in death: and—of their consummation therein when they receive their bodies glorified, in the general resurrection. Both these may not unfitly be signified by the phrase in the text "when I awake": For, though Scripture doth more directly apply the term of awaking to the latter, there will be no violence done to the metaphor, if we extend its signification to the former also. To which purpose it is to be noted, that it is not death formally, or the disanimating of the body, we would have here to be understood by it (which indeed sleeping would more aptly signify than awaking,) but, what is co-incident therewith in the same period, the exuscitation, and revival of the soul. When the body falls asleep, then doth the spirit awake; and the eye-lids of the morning, even of an eternal day, do now first open upon it.

1. Therefore we shall not exclude from this season the introductive state of blessedness, which takes its beginning from the blessed soul's first entrance into the invisible state. And the fitness of admitting it will appear by clearing these two things,—that its condition in this life, even at the best, is in some sort but asleep: and—that when it passes out of it into the invisible regions, it is truly said to awake.

(1.) Its abode in this mortal body, is but a continual sleep; its senses are bound up; a drowsy slumber possesses and suspends all its faculties and powers. Before the renovating change, how frequently do the Scriptures speak of sinners as men asleep? Let not us sleep as do others. Awake thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, &c. (1. Thes 5. 6. Eph. 5. 14.) They are in a dead sleep, under the sleep of death: they apprehend things as men asleep. How slight, obscure, hovering notions have they of the most mo-

mentous things! and which it most concerns them to have thorough real apprehensions of! All their thoughts of God, Christ, heaven, hell, of sin, of holiness, are but uncertain, wild guesses, blind hallucinations, incoherent fancies; the absurdity and inconcinnity whereof, they no more reflect upon than men asleep. They know not these things, but only dream of them. They put darkness for light, and light for darkness; have no senses exercised to discern between good and evil. The most substantial realities are with them mere shadows, and chimeras; fancied and imagined dangers startle them (as it is wont to be with men in a dream,) real ones, though never so near them, they as little fear as they. The creature of their own imagination, the lion in the way, which they dream of in their slothful slumber, affrights them; but the real roaring lion that is ready to devour them, they are not afraid of.

And conversion doth but relax, and intermit; it doth not totally break off this sleep: it, as it were, attenuates the noo sopiting fumes, doth not utterly dispel them. What a difficulty is it to watch but one hour? There are some lucid and vivid intervals, but of how short continuance? how soon doth the awakened soul close its heavy eyes and falls asleep again? how often do temptations surprise even such, in their slumbering fits, while no sense of their danger can prevail with them to watch and pray (with due care and constancy) lest they enter therein-to? So well doth the apostle's watch-word suit our case, Awake to righteousness, and sin not, &c. 1. Cor. 15. 34. we keep not our spirits in a watchful considering posture. Our eyes, that should be ever towards the Lord, will not be kept open, and though we resolve, we forget ourselves; before we are aware, we find ourselves overtaken; sleep comes on upon us like an armed man, and we cannot avert it. How often do we hear, and read, and pray, and meditate as persons asleep, as if we knew not what we were about? How remarkable useful providences escape either our notice or due improvement, amidst our secure slumbers? How many visits from heaven are lost to us, when we are, as it were between sleeping and waking, I sleep, but my heart waketh, (Cant. 5. 2.) and hardly own the voice that calls upon us, till our beloved hath withdrawn himself? Indeed, what is the whole of our life here but a dream? the entire scene of this sensible world but a vision of the night; where every man walks but in a vain show? (Psal. 39. 6.) where we are mocked with shadows, and our credulous sense abused by impostures and delusive appearances? Nor are we ever secure from the most destructive, mischievous deception, further than as our souls are possesed with the apprehensions, that this is

the very truth of our case; and thence instructed to consider, and not to prefer the shadows of time before the great realities of eternity.

Nor is this sleep casual, but even connatural to our present state, the necessary result of so strict a union and commerce with the body; which is to the in-dwelling spirit, as a dormitory or charnel-house rather than a mansion. A soul drenched in sensuality (a Lethe that hath too little of fiction in it,) and immured in a slothful, putrid flesh, sleeps as it were by fate not by chance, and is only capable of full relief by suffering a dissolution; which it hath reason to welcome as a jubilee, and in the instant of departure to sacrifice as he did, * (with that easy and warrantable change, to make a heathen expression scriptural) *Jehovæ liberatori*, to adore and praise its great deliverer; At least (accounts being once made up, and a meetness in any measure attained for the heavenly inheritance, &c.) hath no reason to regret or dread the approaches of the eternal day, more than we do the return of the sun after a dark and longsome night. But, as the sluggard doth nothing more unwillingly than forsake his bed, nor bears any thing with more regret, than to be awaked out of his sweet sleep, though you should entice him with the pleasures of a paradise to quit a smoky, loathsome cottage; so fares it with the sluggish soul, as if it were lodged in an enchanted bed: it is so fast held by the charms of the body, all the glory of the other world is little enough to tempt it out, than which there is not a more deplorable symptom of this sluggish, slumbering state. So deep an oblivion (which you know is also naturally incident to sleep) hath seized it of its own country, of its ailiances above, its relation to the Father and world of spirits; it takes this earth for its home, where it is both in exile and captivity at once: and (as a prince, stolen away in his infancy, and bred up in a beggar's shed) so little seeks, that it declines a better state. This is the degenerous, torpid dispositi·on of a soul lost in flesh, and inwrapt in stupifying clay; which hath been deeply resented by some heathens. So one brings in Socrates pathetically bewailing this oblivious dreaming of his soul, "which (saith he) had seen that pulchritude (you must pardon him here the conceit of its pre-existence) that neither human voice could utter, nor eye behold, but that now, in this life, it had only some little remembrance thereof, as in a dream; being both in respect of place and condition, far removed from

* Viz. Seneca. Who at the time of his death sprinkled water upon the servants about him, addita voce, se liquorem illum libare Jovi liberatori. Saying at the same time he designed that water as a libation to Jove his deliverer. Tacit. Annal.

so pleasant sights, pressed down into an earthly station, and there encompassed with all manner of dirt and filthiness." &c. And to the same purpose Plato often speaks in the name of the same person; and particularly of the winged state of the good soul, (πτερωμα. In Phædro.) when apart from the body, carried in its triumphant flying chariot (of which he gives a large description, somewhat resembling Solomon's rapturous metaphor, "Before I was aware, my soul made me as the chariots of Amminadib;" (Cant. 6. 12.) but being in the body, it is with it as with a bird that hath lost its wings, it falls a sluggish weight to the earth. Which indeed is the state even of the best, in a degree, within this tabernacle. A sleepy torpor stops their flight; they can fall, but not ascend; the remains of such drowsiness do still hang even about saints themselves. The apostle therefore calls upon such, to awake out of sleep; (Rom. 13. 11.) from that consideration (as we know men are not wont to sleep so intensely towards morning) that now their salvation was nearer than when they believed, that is (as some judicious interpreters understand that place, Aretius, Beza, &c.) for that they were nearer death and eternity, than when they first became christians, though this passage be also otherwise, and not improbably, interpreted. However.

(2.) The holy soul's release and dismission from its earthly body, which is that we propounded next to be considered, will excuss and shake off this drowsy sleep. Now is the happy season of its awaking into the heavenly, vital light of God; the blessed morning of that long desired day is now dawned upon it; the cumbersome night-vail is laid aside, and the garments of salvation and immortal glory are now put on. It hath passed through the trouble and darkness of a wearisome night, and now is joy arrived with the morning, as we may be permitted to allude to those words of the Psalmist, (Psal. 30. 5.) though that be not supposed to be the peculiar sense. I conceive myself here not concerned operously to insist in proving, that the souls of saints sleep not in the interval between death and the general resurrection, but enjoy present blessedness. It being besides the design of a practical discourse, which rather intends the propounding and improvement of things acknowledged and agreed, for the advantage and benefit of them with whom they are so; than the discussing of things dubious and controversible. And what I here propound in order to a consequent improvement and application, should methinks pass for an acknowledged truth, among them that professedly believe, and seriously read and consider the Bible, (for mere philosophers that do not come into this account, it were impertinent to discourse with them from a text of Scripture) and where my design only obliges me

to intend the handling of that, and to deliver from it what may fitly be supposed to have its ground there; unless their allegations did carry with them the shew of demonstrating the simple impossibility of what is asserted thence to the power of that God whose word we take it to be; which I have not found any thing they say to amount to. That we have reason to presume it an acknowledged thing, among them that will be concluded by Scripture, That the soul doth not sleep when it ceases to animate its earthly body, many plain texts do evince, which are amassed together by the reverend Mr. Baxter; in his saint's rest, p. 2. c. 10. some of the principal whereof I would invite any that waver in this matter seriously to consider: as the words of our Saviour to the thief on the cross, This day shalt thou be with me in paradise. (Luke 23. 43.) That of the apostle, we are willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. (2. Cor. 5. 8.) And that, I am in a straight, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ. (Phil. 1. 23.) that passage, the spirits of just men made perfect, &c. (Heb. 12. 23.) Which are expressions so clear, that it is hard for an industrious caviller to find what to except to them; and indeed, the very exceptions that are put in, are so frivolous, that they carry a plain confession there is nothing colourable to be said.

* It is true, that divers of the fathers and others have spoken, some dubiously, some very diminishingly of the blessedness of separate souls; many of those words may be seen together in that elaborate tractate of the learned Parker, de descens. lib. secund. p. 77. Yea, and his own assertion in that very page (be it spoken with reverence to the memory of so worthy a person) argues something gross, and I conceive, unwarrantable thoughts of the soul's dependance on a body of earth. His words are, *Tertium vulnus* (speaking of the prejudices the soul receives by its separation from the body) *omnes operationes etiam suas, quæ sunt præsertim ad extra, extinguit: the third wound of the soul destroys all its operations especially those which are towards external objects.* Where he makes it a difficulty to allow it any operations at all, as appears by the *præsertim* inserted. He first indeed denies it all operations, and then, more confidently and especially, those *ad extra.* And if he would be understood to exclude it only from its operations *ad extra* (if he take operations *ad extra* as that phrase is wont to be taken) he must then mean by it, all such operations as have their objects, not only those that have their terms to which without the agent, that is, not only all transient but all immanent acts that have their objects without them. As when we say, all God's acts *ad extra* are free; we mean it even of his immanent acts that have their objects without him, though they do not *ponere terminum extra Deum: place their term out of God;* as his election, his love of the elect. And so he must be understood to deny the separate souls (and that with a *præsertim* too) the opera-

Yea, and most evident it is from those texts; not only that holy souls sleep not, in that state of separation; but that they are awaked by it (as out of a former sleep) into a much more lively and vigorous activity than they enjoyed before; and translated into a state, as much better than their former, as the tortures of a cross are more ungrateful than the pleasures of a paradise; these joys fuller of vitality, than those sickly dying, faintings; as the immediate presence, and close embraces of the Lord of life are more delectable than a mournful disconsolate absence from from him (which the apostle therefore tells us he desired as far better, and with an emphasis which our English too faintly expresses; for he uses a double comparative πολλω μαλλον κρεισσον *by much more better*: (and, as a perfected, that is a crowned triumphant spirit, that hath attained the end of its race (as the words import in the agonistical notion*) is now in a more vivid joyous state, than when, lately, toiling in a tiresome way, it languished under many imperfections. And it is observable, that in the three former striptures that phrase, of being with Christ, or, being present with him, is the same which is used

tions of knowing God, of loving him, and delighting in him; which are all operations *ad extra*, as having their objects *extra animam*, though their *terminus ad quem* be not so; which makes the condition of the separate souls of saints unspeakably inferior to what it was in the body, and what should occasion so dismal thoughts of that state of separation, I see not. Scripture gives no ground for them, but evidently enough speaks the contrary. Reason and philosophy offer nothing, that can render the sense we put upon the fore-mentioned plain scriptures, self-contradictious or impossible. Yea, such as had no other light or guide, have thought the facility of the soul's operations, being separate from its earthly body, much greater by that very separation. And upon this score doth saint Augustine, with great indignation, inveigh against the philosophers (Plato more especially) because they judged the separation of the soul from the body necessary to its blessedness. *Quia videlicet ejus perfectam beatitudinem tunc illi fieri existimant cum omni prorsus corpore exuta, ad Deum simplex, et sola et quodommodo nuda redierit*: *because indeed they think that its perfect blessedness takes place, when having completely put off the body, it returns in its simple, separate, and as it were naked form to God.* De civit. Dei l. 13. c. 16.) unto which purpose the words of Philolaus Pythagoricus, of Plato, of Porphyrius, are cited by Ludovicus Vives, in his comment upon that abovementioned passage. The first speaking thus, *Deposito corpore hominem Deum immortalem fieri: that when the body is laid down man becomes the immortal God.* The second thus—*Trahi nos a corpore ad ima, et a cogitatione superarum rerum subinde*

* See Dr. Hammond's annot. in loc.

by the apostle, (1 Thes. 4. 17.) to express the state of blessedness after the resurrection; intimating plainly, the sameness of the blessedness before and after. And though this phrase be also used to signify the present enjoyment saints have of God's gracious present in this life (which is also in nature, and kind the same;) yet it is plainly used in these scriptures (the two latter more especially) to set out to us such a degree of that blessedness, that in comparison thereof, our present being with Christ is a not-being with him; our presence with him, now, an absence from him: While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, and, I am in a strait betwixt two, desiring to depart (or having a desire unto dissolution) and to be with Christ, &c. How strangely mistaken and disappointed had the blessed apostle been, had his absence from the body, his dissolution, his release, set him further off from Christ, or made him less capable of converse with him, than before he was? And how absurd would it be to say, the spirits of the just are perfected, by being cast into a stupifying sleep; yea, or being put into any

revocari: ideo relinquendem corpus, et hic quantum possumus et in altera vita prorsum, ut liberi et expediti, verum ipsi videamus et optimum amemus: that we are borne down by the body to the earth, and are continually recalled from the contemplation of higher things: the body must therefore be relinquished as much as possible even here, and altogether in another life, that free and unincumbered, we may discern truth and love goodness. The third denies—*Aliter fieri beatum quenquam posse, nisi relinquat corpus et effigatur Deo: that any one can otherwise become happy, but by relinquishing the body, and being absorbed in God.* I conceive it by the way not improbable, that the severity of that pious father against that dogma of the philosophers, might proceed upon this ground, that what they said of the impossibility of being happy in an earthly body, he understood meant by them of an impossibility to be happy in any body at all; when it is evidently the common opinion of the Platonists, that the soul is always united with somebody or other, and that even the dæmons have bodies (aireal or ætherial ones;) which Plato himself is observed by St. Augustine to affirm whence he would fasten a contradiction on him, ibid. not considering (it is likely) that he would much less have made a difficulty, to concede such bodies also to human souls after they had lost their terrestial ones, as his sectators do not; who hold they then presently become dæmons. In the mean time it is evident enough, the doctrine of the separate soul's present blessedness, is not destitute of the patronage and suffrage of philosophers. And it is indeed the known opinion of as many of them as ever held its immortality (which all of all ages and nations have done, a very few excepted) for inasmuch as they knew nothing of the resurrection of the body, they could not dream of a sleeping interval. And it is at least a shrewd presumption that

state, not better than they were in before? But their state is evidently far better. The body of death is now laid aside, and the weights of sin, that did so easily beset, are shaken off; flesh and sin are laid down together; the soul is rid of its burthensome bands and shackles, hath quitted its filthy darksome prison (the usual place of laziness and sloth,) is come forth of its drowsy dormitory, and the glory of God is risen upon it. It is now come into the world of realities, where things appear as they are, no longer as in a dream, or vision of the night. The vital quickening beams of divine light are darting in upon it on every side, and turning it into their own likeness. The shadows of the evening are vanished, and fled away. It converses with no objects but what are full themselves, and most apt to replenish it with energy and life. This cannot be but a joyful awaking, a blessed season of satisfaction and delight indeed, to the enlightened, revived soul. But,

2. It must be acknowledged, the further and more eminent season of this blessedness will be the general resurrection-day, which is more expressly signified in Scripture by this term of *awaking;* as is manifest in many plain texts, where it is either expressly thus used, or implied to have this meaning in the opposite sense of the word sleep. Dan. 12. 2. John. 14. 12. 2 Cor. 15. 2 Thes. 4. &c. What additions shall then be

nothing in reason lies against it, when no one instance can be given, among them that professedly gave up themselves to its only guidance of any one, that granting the immortality of the soul, and its separableness from its terrestrial body, ever denied the immediate blessedness of good souls in that state of separation. Nor (if we look into the thing itself) is it at all more unapprehensible that the soul should be independent on the body in its operations than in its existence? If it be possible enough to form an unexceptionable notion of a spiritual being, distinct and separable from any corporeal substance (which the learned doctor More hath sufficiently demonstrated in his treatise of the immortality of the soul) with its proper attributes, and powers peculiar to itself; what can reasonably withhold me from asserting, that being separate from the body, it may as well operate alone, (I mean exert such operations as are proper to such a being) as exist alone? That we find it here, *de facto, in fact*, in its present state, acting only with dependance on a body, will no more infer, that it can act no otherwise, than its present existence in a body will that it can never exist out of it, neither whereof amounts to more than the trifling exploded argument *a non esse ad non posse, that because a thing is not it cannot be*, and would be as good sense as to say, such a one walks in his clothes, therefore out of them he cannot move a foot. Yea, and the very use itself which the soul now makes of corporeal organs and instruments, plainly evidences, that it doth exert some action wherein they assist it not. For it supposes

made to the saints' blessedness, lies more remote from our apprehension; in as much as Scripture states not the degree of that blessedness which shall intervene. We know, by a too sad instructive experience, the calamities of our present state, and can therefore more easily conceive, wherein it is capable of betterment, by the deposition of a sluggish, cumbersome body, where those calamities mostly have their spring: but then we know less where to fix our foot, or whence to take our rise, in estimating the additional felicities of that future state, when both the states to be compared are so unknown to us. But that there will be great additions is plain enough. The full recompence of obedience, and devotedness to Christ, of foregoing all for him, is affixed by his promise to the resurrection of the just; The judgment-day gives every one his portion according to his works. Then must the holy, obedient christian hear from his Redeemers mouth, Come ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom, &c. Till then the devils think their torment to be before their time. It is when he shall appear we shall be like him, and see him as he is. That noted day is the day of being presented faultless with exceeding joy. And divers things there

an operation upon them antecedent to any operation by them. Nothing can be the instrument which is not first the subject of my action; as when I use a pen, I act upon it in order to my action by it, that is, I impress a motion upon it, in order whereunto I use not that or any other such instrument; and though I cannot produce the designed effect, leave such characters so and so figured, without it; my hand can yet, without it, perform its own action, proper to itself, and produce many nobler effects. When therefore the soul makes use of a bodily organ, its action upon it must needs at last be without the ministry of any organ, unless you multiply to it body upon body in *infinitum*. And if possibly, it perform not some meaner and grosser pieces of drudgery when out of the body, wherein it made use of its help and service before; that is no more a disparagement or dimunition, than it is to the magistrate, that law and decency permit him not to apprehend or execute a malefactor wih this own hand. It may yet perform those operations which are proper to itself; that is, such as are more noble and excellent, and immediately conducive to its own felicity. Which sort of actions, as cogitation for instance, and dilection, though being done in the body, there is conjunct with them an agitation of the spirits in the brain and heart; it yet seems to me more reasonable, than as to those acts, the spirits are rather subjects than instruments at all of them; that the whole essence of these acts is antecedent to the motion of the spirits; and that motion certainly (but accidently) consequent, only by reason of the present, but soluble union the soul hath with the body. And that the purity and refinedness of those spirits doth only remove what would hinder such acts, rather than contribute positively thereto. And so little is

are obviously enough to be reflected on, which cannot but be understood to contribute much to the increase and improvement of this inchoate blessedness. The acquisition of a glorified body. For our vile bodies shall be so far transfigured, as to be made like [conform to] the glorious body of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: (μεἰασχη ματισει, συμμοϱφον. Phil. 3. 20. 21.) And this shall be when he shall appear from heaven, where saints here below are required to have their commerce, as the enfranchised citizens thereof, and from whence they are to continue, looking for him in the mean time. When he terminates and puts a period to that expectation of his saints on earth, then shall that great change be made, that is, when he actually appears, at which time the trumpet sounds, and even sleeping dust itself awakes; (1 Thes. 4. 14. 15. 16.) the hallowed dust of them that slept in Jesus first, who are then to come with

the alliance between a thought, and any bodily thing, even those very finest spirits themselves; that I dare say, whoever sets himself closely and strictly to consider and debate the matter with his own faculties, will find it much more easily apprehensible, how the acts of intellection and volition may be performed without those very corporeal spirits than by them. However suppose them never so indispensibly necessary to those more noble operations of the soul, it may easily be furnished with them, and in greater plenty and purity, from the ambient air, (or æther) than from a dull torpid body; with some part of which air, if we suppose it to contract a vital union, I know no rational principle that is wronged by the supposition, though neither do I know any that can necessarily infer it. As therefore the doctrine of the soul's activity out of his earthly body, hath favour and friendship enough from philosophers; so I doubt not, but upon the most strict and rigid disquisition, it would be as much befriended (or rather righted) by philosophy itself; and that their reason would afford it as direct, and more considerable defence than their authority.

In the mean time, it deserves to be considered with some resentment, that this doctrine should find the generality of learned pagans more forward advocates than some learned and worthy patrons of the Christian faith; which is only imputable to the undue measure and excess of an, otherwise, just zeal, in these latter, for the resurrection of the body; so far transporting them, that they became willing to let go one truth, that they might hold another the faster; and to ransom this at the too dear (and unnecessary) expence of the former: accounting, they could never make sure enough the resurrection of the body, without making the soul's dependance on it so absolute and necessary, that it should be able to do nothing but sleep in the mean while. Whereas it seems a great deal more unconceivable, how such a being as the soul is, once quit of the entanglements and encumbrances of the body, should sleep at all, than how it should act without the body.

him. This change may well be conceived to add considerably to their felicity. A natural congruity and appetite is now answered and satisfied, which did either lie dormant, or was under somewhat an anxious restless expectation before; neither of which could well consist with a state of blessedness, every-way already perfect. And that there is a real desire and expectation of this change, seems to be plainly intimated in those words of Job, All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come: (chap. 14. 14.) Where he must rather be understood to speak of the resurrection than of death (as his words are commonly mistaken, and misapplied;) as will appear by setting down the context from the seventh verse, for there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground: yet through the scent of water, it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth, and dryeth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more: they shall not be awaked nor raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret till thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands. He first speaks according to common apprehension, and sensible appearance, touching the hopeless state of man in death: as though it were less capable of reparation than that of some inferior creatures, unto the end of ver. 10. And then gradually discovers his better hope; betrays this faith, as it were obliquely, touching this point; lets it break out, first, in some obscure glimmerings, (ver. 11. 12.) giving us, in his *protasis*, a similitude not fully expressive of his seeming meaning, for waters and floods that fail may be renewed; and in his *Apodosis* more openly intimating, man's sleep should be only till the heavens were no more: which *till* might be supposed to signify *never*, were it not for what follows, ver. 13. where he expressly speaks his confidence by way of petition, that at a set and appointed time, God would remember him, so as to recall him out of the grave: and at last, being now minded to speak out more fully, puts the question to himself, If a man die, shall he live again? and answers it, All the days of my appointed time, that is of that appointed time which he mentioned before, when God should revive him out of the dust; will I wait till my change come; that is, that glorious

change, when the corruption of a loathsome grave should be exchanged for immortal glory; which he amplifies, and utters more expressly, ver. 15. Thou shalt call, and I will answer; thou shalt have a desire to the work of thy hands: Thou wilt not always forget to restore and perfect thy own creature.

And surely that waiting is not the act of his inanimate sleeping dust; but though it be spoken of the person totally gone into *hades*, into the invisible state; it is to be understood of that part that should be capable of such an action; as though he had said I, in that part that shall be still alive, shall patiently await thy appointed time of reviving me in that part also, which death and the grave shall insult over (in a temporary triumph) in the mean time; and so will the words carry a facile, commodious sense, without the unnecessary help of an imagined rhetorical scheme of speech. And then, that this waiting carries in it a desirous expectation of some additional good, is evident at first sight; which therefore must needs add to the satisfaction and blessedness of the expecting soul. And wherein it may do so, is not altogether unapprehensible. Admit, that a spirit, had it never been embodied, might be as well without a body, or that it might be as well provided of a body out of other materials; it is no unreasonable supposition, that a connate aptitude to a body, should render human souls more happy in a body sufficiently attempered to their most noble operations. And how much doth relation and propriety endear things, otherwise mean and inconsiderable? or why should it be thought strange, that a soul connaturalized to matter, should be more particularly inclined to a particular portion thereof? so as that it should appropriate such a part, and say it is mine? And will it not be a pleasure, to have a vitality diffused through what even more remotely appertains to me, have every thing belonging to the *suppositum* perfectly vindicated from the tyrannous dominion of death? The returning of the spirits into a benumbed or sleeping toe or finger, adds a contentment to a man which he wanted before. Nor is it hence necessary the soul should covet a re-union with every effluvious particle of its former body: a desire implanted by God in a reasonabe soul will aim at what is convenient, not what shall be cumbersome or monstrous. And how pleasant will it be to contemplate and admire the wisdom and power of the great Creator in this so glorious a change, when I shall find a clod of earth, a heap of dust, refined into a celestial purity and brightness? when what was sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption; what was sown in dishonour, is raised in glory; what was sown in weakness, is raised in power; what was sown a natural body, is raised a spiritual body? when this corruptible shall have put on incorrup-

tion, and this mortal, immortality, and death be wholly swallowed up in victory? So that this awaking may well be understood to carry that in it, which may bespeak it the proper season of the saints' consummate satisfaction and blessedness. But besides what it carries in itself, there are other (more extrinsical) concurrents that do further signalize this season, and import a greater increase of blessedness then to God's holy ones. The body of Christ is now completed, the fullness of him that filleth all in all, and all the so nearly related parts cannot but partake in the perfection and reflected glory of the whole. There is joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner though he have a troublesome scene yet to pass over afterwards, in a tempting, wicked, unquiet world; how much more when the many sons shall be all brought to glory together? The designs are all now accomplished, and wound up into the most glorious result and issue, whereof the divine providence had been, as in travel, for so many thousand years. It is now seen how exquisite wisdom governed the world, and how steady a tendency the most intricate and perplexed methods of providence had, to one stated and most worthy end. Especially the constitution, administration, and ends of the Mediator's kingdom, are now beheld in their exact aptitudes, order and conspicuous glory; when so blessed an issue and success shall commend and crown the whole undertaking. The divine authority is now universally acknowledged and adored; his justice is vindicated and satisfied; his grace demonstrated and magnified to the uttermost. The whole assembly of saints solemnly acquitted by public sentence, presented spotless and without blemish to God, and adjudged to eternal blessedness. It is the day of solemn triumph and jubilation, upon the finishing of all God's works, from the creation of the world, wherein the Lord Jesus appears to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe: (2 Thes. 1. 10) upon which ensues the resignation of the Mediator's kingdom (all the ends of it being now attained) that the Father himself may be immediately all in all. 1 Cor. 15. 28. How aptly then are the fuller manifestations of God, the more glorious display of all his attributes, the larger and more abundant effusions of himself, reserved (as the best wine to the last) unto this joyful day! Created perfections could not have been before so absolute, but they might admit of improvement; their capacities not so large, but they might be extended further; and then who can doubt but that divine communications may also have a proportionable increase, and that upon the concourse of so many great occasions they shall have so?

CHAP. XI.

I. An introduction to the use of the doctrine hitherto proposed. II. The use divided into. *First.* Inferences of truth. *Secondly.* Rules of duty. 1. Inference, That blessedness consists not in any sensual enjoyment. 2. Inference, The spirit of man(since it is capable of so high a blessedness) is a being of high excellency.

I. AND now is our greatest work yet behind; the improvement of so momentous a truth, to the affecting and transforming of hearts: that (if the Lord shall so far vouchsafe his assistance and blessing) they may taste the sweetness, feel the power, and bear the impress and image of it. This is the work, both of greatest necessity, difficulty, and excellency, and unto which, all that hath been done hitherto, is but subservient and introductive. Give me leave therefore, reader, to stop thee here, and demand of thee before thou go further; Hast thou any design, in turning over these leaves, of bettering thy spirit, of getting a more refined, heavenly temper of soul? art thou weary of thy dross and earth, and longing for the first fruits, the beginnings of glory? dost thou wish for a soul meet for the blessedness hitherto described? what is here written is designed for thy help and furtherance. But if thou art looking on these pages with a wanton, rolling eye, hunting for novelties, or what may gratify a prurient wit, a coy and squeamish fancy; go read a romance, or some piece of drollery; know here is nothing for thy turn; and dread to meddle with matters of everlasting concernment without a serious spirit; read not another line till thou have sighed out this request, "Lord keep me from trifling with the things of eternity." Charge thy soul to consider, that what thou art now reading must be added to thy account against the great day. It is amazing to think, with what vanity of mind the most weighty things of religion are entertained amongst christians. Things that should swallow up our souls, drink up our spirits, are heard

Dissoluti est pectoris in rebus seriis quærere voluptatem. It is a mark of a trifling mind to seek amusement in serious things. Arnob.

as a tale that is told, disregarded by most, scorned by too many. What can be spoken so important, or of so tremendous consequence, or of so confessed truth, or with so awful solemnity and premised mention of the sacred name of the Lord, as not to find either a very slight entertainment or contemptuous rejection; and this by persons avowing themselves christians? We seem to have little or no advantage, in urging men upon their own principles, and with things they most readily and professedly assent to. Their hearts are as much untouched, and void of impression by the Christian doctrine, as if they were of another religion. How unlike is the Christian world to the Christian doctrine! The seal is fair and excellent, but the impression is languid, or not visible. Where is that serious godliness, that heavenliness, that purity, that spirituality, that righteousness, that peace, unto which the Christian religion is most aptly designed to work and form the spirits of men? We think to be saved by an empty name; and glory in the shew and appearance of that, the life and power whereof we hate and deride. It is a reproach with us not to be called a christian, and a greater reproach to be one. If such and such doctrines obtain not in our professed belief, we are heretics or infidels; if they do in our practice, we are precisians and fools. To be so serious, and circumspect, and strict, and holy, to make the practice of godliness so much our business, as the known and avowed principles of our religion do plainly exact from us (yea, though we come, as we cannot but do, unspeakably short of that required measure,) is to make one's self a common derision and scorn. Not to be professedly religious is barbarous, to be so in good earnest ridiculous. In other things men are wont to act and practise according to the known rules of their several callings and professions, and he would be reckoned the common fool of the neighbour-hood that should not do so: the husbandman that should sow when others reap, or contrive his harvest into the depth of winter, or sow fitches, and expect to reap wheat; the merchant that should venture abroad his most precious commodities in a leaky bottom, without pilot or compass, or to places not likely to afford him any valuable return. In religion only it must be accounted absurd, to be and do according to its known agreed principles, and he a fool that shall but practise as all about him profess to believe. Lord! whence is this apprehended inconsistancy between the profession and practice of religion? what hath thus stupified and unmaned the world, that seriousness in religion should be thought the character of a fool? that men must visibly make a mockery of the most fundamental articles of faith only to save their reputation, and be afraid to be serious, lest they should be thought mad! Were

the doctrine here opened, believed in earnest, were the due proper impress of it upon our spirits, or (as the pagan moralist's *expression is) were our minds transfigured into it; what manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness? But it is thought enough to have it in our creed, though never in our hearts; and such as will not deride the holiness it should produce, yet endeavour it not, nor go about to apply and urge truths upon their own souls to any such purpose. What should turn into grace and spirit and life, turns all into notion and talk; and men think all is well, if their heads be filled, and their tongues tipt, with what should transform their souls, and govern their lives. How are the most awful truths, and that should have greatest power upon men's spirits, trifled with as matters only of speculation and discourse! They are heard but as empty, airy words and presently evaporate, pass away into words again; like food, as Seneca speaks, *Non prodest cibus, nec corpori accedit, qui statim sumptus emittitur. that comes up presently, the same that it was taken in; which* (as he saith) *profits not, nor makes any accession to the body at all.* Sen. Epist. A like case (as another ingeniously speaks, Επει και τα προβατα, ὁ χορτον φερουσα τοις ποιμεσιν επιδεικνυει ποσον εφαγεν, αλλα την νομην εσω πεψασα, εριον εξω φερει και γαλα και συ τοινυν, μη ταχεως ρημαια τοις ιδιωταις εωιδει κνευε, αλλα απ αυλων πεφθεντων τα εργα: *as if sheep when they had been feeding, should present their shepherds with the very grass itself which they have crept, and shew how much they had eaten.* No, saith he, *they concoct it, and so yield them wool and milk.* Epictet. And so, saith he, do not you (namely when you have been instructed) presently go and utter words among the more ignorant (meaning they should not do so in a way of ostentation, to shew how much they knew more than others) "but works that follow upon the concoction of what hath been by words made known to them." Let christians be ashamed that they need this instruction from heathen teachers.

Thy words were found, and I did eat them (saith the prophet,) and thy word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. Divine truth is only so far at present grateful, or useful for future, as it is received by faith and consideration, and in the love thereof into the very heart, and there turned in *succum et sanguinem: into real nutriment to the soul:* so shall man live by the word of God. Hence is the application of it

* Scientiam qui didicit, et facienda et vitanda præcepit, nondum sapiens est, nisi in ea quæ didicit transfiguratus est animus. Though a man have learned moral science and may teach what is to be done, and what is to be avoided, yet he is not a wise man unless his mind is transfigured into his doctrine.

(both personal and ministerial) of so great necessity. If the truths of the gospel were of the same alloy with some parts of philosophy, whose end is attained as soon as they are known; if the Scripture-doctrine (the whole entire system of it) were not a doctrine after godliness; if it were not designed to sanctify and make men holy; or if the hearts of men did not reluctate, were easily receptive of its impressions; our work were as soon done, as such a doctrine were nakedly proposed: but the state of the case in these respects is known and evident. The tenour and aspect of gospel-truth speaks its end; and experience too plainly speaks the oppositeness of men's spirits. All therefore we read and hear is lost if it be not urgently applied: the Lord grant it be not then too. Therefore, reader, let thy mind and heart concur in the following improvement of this doctrine, which will be wholly comprehended under these two heads. Inferences of truth, and rules of duty that are consequent and connatural thereto.

First. Inferences of truth deducible from it.

1. True blessedness consists not in any sensual enjoyment. The blessedness of a man can be but one; most only one. He can have but one highest and best good. And its proper character is, that it finally satisfies and gives rest to his spirit. This the face and likeness of God doth; his glory beheld and participated. Here then alone his full blessedness must be understood to lie. Therefore as this might many other ways be evinced to be true; so it evidently appears to be the proper issue of the present truth, and is plainly proved by it. But alas! it needs a great deal more to be pressed than proved. O that it were but as much considered as it is known! The experience of almost six thousand years, hath (one would think sufficiently) testified the incompetency of every worldly thing to make men happy; that the present pleasing of our senses, and the gratification of our animal part is not blessedness; that men are still left unsatisfied notwithstanding. But the practice and course of the world are such, as if this were some late and rare experiment; which (for curiosity) every one must be trying over again. Every age renews the enquiry after an earthly felicity; the design is entailed (as the Spanish designs are said to be,) and re-inforced with as great a confidence and vigour from age to age, as if none had been baffled or defeated in it before; or that it were very likely to take at last. Had this been the alone folly of the first age, it had admitted some excuse; but that the world should still be cheated by the same so often repeated impostures, presents us with a sad prospect of the deplorable state of mankind. This their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve, &c. Psal. 49. 13. The wearied wits and wasted

estates, laid out upon the philosopher's stone, afford but a faint, defective representation of this case. What chemistry can extract heaven out of a clod of clay? What art can make blessedness spring and grow out of this cold earth? If all created nature be vexed and tortured never so long, who can expect this elixir? Yet after so many frustrated attempts, so much time, and strength, and labour lost, men are still as eagerly and vainly busy as ever; are perpetually tossed by unsatisfied desires, labouring in the fire, wearying themselves for very vanity, distracted by the uncertain, and often contrary motions of a ravenous appetite, and a blind mind, that would be happy, and knows not how. With what sounding bowels, with what compassionate tears should the state of mankind be lamented, by all that understand the worth of a soul? What serious heart doth not melt and bleed for miserable men, that are (through a just nemesis *) so perpetually mocked with shadows, cheated with false, delusive appearances, infatuated and betrayed by their own senses. They walk but in a vain shew, disquieting themselves in vain; their days flee away as a shadow, their strength is only labour and sorrow; while they rise up early and lie down late, to seek rest in trouble and life in death. They run away from blessedness while they pretend to pursue it, and suffer themselves to be led down without regret to perdition, "as an ox to the slaughter, and a fool to the correction of the stocks, till a dart strike through their liver:" descend patiently to the chambers of death, not so much as once thinking, Whither are we going? dream of nothing but an earthly paradise, till they find themselves amidst the infernal regions.

2. The spirit of man, inasmuch as it is capable of such a ‡blessedness, appears an excellent creature. Its natural capacity is supposed; for the psalmist speaks of his own numerical person, the same that then writ; I shall behold; shall be satisfied;

* Ira Dei est ista vita mortalis, ubi homo vanitati factus est, et dies ejus velut umbra prætereunt, &c. The wrath of God is shewn in this mortal life, wherein man is made like to vanity and his days pass away as a shadow. Aug. de Civ. Dei. l. 22. c. 24.

‡Not that this blessedness can be attained by mere human endeavours, (more whereof see under the next inference) but there is an inclination, a certain *pondus naturæ; a weight of nature* (as some Schoolmen speak) by which it propends towards it; or there is the *radix, root* or *fundamentum, foundation*, or *capacitas, capacity*, (as some others) that is that it not only may receive it; but that it may be elevated by grace, actively to concur, by its natural powers, as vital principles towards the attainment of it, according to that known saying of saint Augustine, *Posse credere naturæ est hominis, the power of believing is natural to man.* &c.

take away this *suppositum*, and it could not be so said; or as in Job's words; I shall behold him, and not another for me; it would certainly be another, not the same. Judge hence the excellency of a human soul (the principal subject of this blessedness) without addition of any new natural powers, it is capable of the vision of God; of partaking unto satisfaction the divine likeness. And is not that an excellent creature, that is capable not only of surveying the creation of God, passing through the several ranks and orders of created beings; but of ascending to the Being of beings, of contemplating the divine excellencies, of beholding the bright and glorious face of the blessed God himself; till it have looked itself into his very likeness, and have his entire image inwrought into it. The dignity then of the spirit of man is not to be estimated by the circumstances of its present state, as it is here clad with a sordid flesh, inwraped in darkness, and grovelling in the dust of the earth: but consider the improveableness of its natural powers and faculties; the high perfections it may attain, and the foundations of how glorious a state are laid in its very nature. And then who can tell, whether its possible advancement is more to be admired, or its present calamity deplored. Might this consideration be permitted to settle and fix itself in the hearts of men; could any thing be so grievous to them, as their so vast distance from such an attainable blessedness; or any thing be so industriously avoided, so earnestly abhorred, as that viler dejection and abasement of themselves, when they are so low already by divine disposition, to descend lower by their own wickedness; when they are already fallen as low as earth, to precipitate themselves as low as hell. How generous a disdain should that thought raise in men's spirits, of that vile servitude to which they have subjected themselve, a servitude to brutal lusts, to sensual inclinations and desires; as if the highest happiness they did project to themselves were the satisfaction of these! Would they not with a heroic scorn turn away their eyes from beholding vanity, did they consider their own capacity of beholding the divine glory? could they satisfy themselves to become * like the beasts that perish,

* Voluptas bonum pecoris est——Hunc tu (non dico inter viros sed) inter homines numeras? cujus summum bonum saporibus, ac coloribus, ac sonis constat? excedat ex hoc animalium numero pulcherrimo, ac diis secundo; mutis aggregetur animal pabulo natum. Pleasure is the good of beasts—Do you number such a creature (I will not say among men but) among human beings whose chief good consists in tastes and colours and sounds! Let him quit this class of the animate creation which is the fairest and next to God himself. Let an animal made only for foddering herd with the brutes &c. Sen. Ep. 92.

did they think of being satisfied with the likeness of God? And who can conceive unto what degree this aggravates the sin of man, that he so little minds (as it will their misery, that shall fall short of) this blessedness! They had spirits capable of it. Consider thou sensual man whose happiness lies in colours, and tastes, and sounds, (as the moralist ingeniously speaks) that herdest thyself with brute creatures, and aimest no higher than they: as little lookest up, and art as much a stranger to the thoughts and desires of heaven; thy creation did not set thee so low; they are where they were; but thou art fallen from thy excellency. God did not make thee a brute creature, but thou thyself. Thou hast yet a spirit about thee, that might understand its own original, and alliance to the Father of spirits; that hath a designation in its nature to higher converses and employments. Many myriads of such spirits, of no higher original excellency than thy own, are now in the presence of the highest Majesty; are prying into the eternal glory, contemplating the perfections of the divine nature, beholding the unvailed face of God, which transfuses upon them its own satisfying likeness. Thou art not so low-born, but thou mightest attain this state also. That sovereign Lord and Author of all things, calls thee to it; his goodness invites thee, his authority enjoins thee to turn thy thoughts and designs this way. Fear not to be thought immodest or presumptuous; * it is but a dutiful ambition; an obedient aspiring. Thou art under a law to be thus happy; nor doth it bind thee to any natural impossibility; it designs instructions to thee, not delusion; guidance, not mockery. When thou art required to apply and turn thy soul to this blessedness; it is not the same thing, as if thou wert bidden to remove a mountain, to pluck down a star, or create a world. Thou art here put upon nothing but what is agreeable to the primeval nature of man; and though it be to a vast heighth, thou must ascend; it is by so easy and familiar methods, by so apt gradations, that thou wilt be sensible of no violence done to thy nature in all thy way. Do but make some trials with thyself; thou wilt soon find nothing is the hindrance but an unwilling heart. Try however (which will suffice to let thee discern thy own capacity, and will be a likely means to make thee willing) how far thou canst understand and trace the way (complying with it at least as reason-

* Hic Deos æquat, illo tendit, originis suæ memor. Nemo, improbe, eo conatur ascendere unde descenderat ——socii eis sumus et membra, &c. This man emulates the gods—mindful of his origin, he tends towards it. No one is wicked in attempting to ascend thither from whence he had descended—we are their companions and their fellow members. Sen. Ep. 92.

able) that leads to this blessedness. Retire a little into thyself; forget awhile thy relation to this sensible world; summon in thy self-reflecting and considering powers: thou wilt presently perceive thou art not already happy, thou art in some part unsatisfied: and thence wilt easily understand, inasmuch as thou art not happy in thyself, that it must be something, as yet without thee, must make thee so: and nothing can make thee happy, but what is in that respect better than thyself; or hath some perfection in it, which thou findest wanting in thyself. A little further discourse or reasoning with thyself, will easily persuade thee, thou hast something better about thee than that luggage of flesh thou goest with to and fro; for thou well knowest, that * is not capable of reason and discourse; and that the power of doing so is a higher perfection than any thou canst entitle it to; and that therefore, besides thy bulky, material part, thou must have such a thing as a spirit or soul belonging to thee to which, that and thy other perfections, not compatible to gross matter, may agree. Thou wilt readily assent, that thou canst never be happy, while thy better and more noble part is unsatisfied; and that it can only be satisfied with something suitable and connatural to it. That therefore thy happiness must lie in something more excellent than this material or sensible world, otherwise it cannot be grateful aud suitable to thy soul, yea, in something that may be better, and more excellent than thy soul itself, otherwise how can it better and perfect that. † As thou canst not but acknowledge thy soul to be spiritual and immaterial, so if thou attend thou wilt soon see cause to acknowledge a spiritual or immaterial being, better and more perfect than thy own soul. For its perfections were not self-originate, they were therefore derived from something, for that reason confessedly more excellent; whence at last also thou wilt find it unavoidably imposed upon thee, to apprehend and adore a Being absolutely perfect, and than which there cannot be a more

* Λογισμος δε και νους, ουκετι ταυτα σωματι διδωσιν αυτα, και γαρ το εργον αυτων ου δι οργανων τελειται τε σωματος εμποδιον γαρ τουτο, ειτις αυτω εν ταις σκεψεσι προχεωτο: Reason and intellect are not the natural powers or endowments of the body, for indeed their exercise is not performed in perfection by means of its organs; it is rather found an impediment than otherwise, if any one endeavour to employ it in intellectual contemplations. Plotin. Enead 4. lib. 3.

† Sicut non est a carne, sed super carnem, quod carnem facit vivere: sic non est ab homine, sed super hominem, quod hominem facit beate vivere: as that which gives life to the flesh is not any thing proceeding from the flesh, but above it, so that is not from man, but above him which endows him with a life of happiness. D. Aug. de Civit. Dei lib. 19. c. 25.

perfect; the first subject and common fountain of all perfections, which hath them underived in himself, and can derive them unto inferior created beings. * Upon this eternal and self-essential Being, the infinitely blessed God, thou necessarily dependest, and owest therefore constant subjection and obedience to him. Thou hast indeed offended him, and art thereby cut off from all interest in him, and intercourse with him; but he hath proclaimed in his gospel, his willingness to be reconciled, and that through the sufferings, righteousness, and intercession of his only begotton Son, thy merciful Redeemer, the way is open for thy restitution and recovery; that thou mayst partake from him whatever perfection is wanting to thy blessedness. Nothing is required from thee in order hereunto, but that relying on and submitting to thy Redeemer's gracious conduct, thou turn thy mind and heart towards thy God, to know him, and conform to him; to view and imitate the divine perfections; the faithful endeavour and inchoation whereof, will have this issue and reward, the clear vision and full participation of them. So that thy way and work differ not, in nature and kind, from thy end and reward; thy duty from thy blessedness. Nor are either repugnant to the natural constitution of thy own soul. What violence is there done to reasonable nature in all this? or what can hinder thee herein, but a most culpably averse and wicked heart? Did thy reason ever turn off thy soul from God? was it not thy corruption only? What vile images dost thou receive from earthly objects, which deform thy soul, while thou industriously averteth thy Maker's likeness that would perfect it? How full is thy mind and heart of vanity! how empty of God! Were this through natural incapacity, thou wert an innocent creature; it were thy infelicity (negative I mean) not thy crime; and must be resolved into the sovereign will of thy Creator, not thy own disobedient will. But when this shall appear the true state of thy case, and thou shalt hear it from the mouth of thy Judge,

* Ut in ordine causarum efficientum, ita et in gradibus vertutis et perfectionis, non datur progressus in infinitum: sed oportet sit aliqua prima et summa perfectio: as in the order of efficient causes so likewise in the degrees of virtue and perfection there cannot be an infinite progression; but there must be some primary and supreme perfection. Pet. Molin de cognitione Dei. Not to insist upon what hath been much urged by learned men of former and latter yea, and of the present time,—that whosoever denies the existence of an absolutely perfect being, contradicts himself in the denial, inasmuch as necessity of existence is included in the very subject of the negation some accounting it a sophism, and it being unseasonable here to discuss it.

"Thou didst not like to retain me in thy knowledge or love; thou had reason and will to use about meaner objects, but none for me; thou couldst sometimes have spared me a glance, a cast of thine eye at least, when thou didst rather choose it should be in the ends of the earth: a thought of me had cost thee as little, might as soon have been thought, as of this or that vanity; but thy heart was not with me. I banish thee, therefore, that presence which thou never lovedst. I deny thee the vision thou didst always shun, and the impression of my likeness which thou didst ever hate. I eternally abandon thee to the darkness and deformities which were ever grateful to thee. Thine is a self-created hell; the fruit of thy own choice; no invitations or persuasions of mind could keep thee from it." How wilt thou excuse thy fault, or avert thy doom! what arguments or apologies shall defend thy cause against these pleadings? Nay, what armour shall defend thy soul against its own wounding self-reflections hereupon? when every thought shall be a dart; and a convicted conscience an ever-gnawing worm, a fiery serpent with endless involutions ever winding about thy heart?

It will now be sadly thought on, how often thou sawest thy way and declinedst it, knewest thy duty and didst wave it; understoodest thy interest and didst slight it; approvedst the things that were more excellent and didst reject them? How often thou didst prevaricate with thy light, and run counter to thine own eyes; while things, confessedly, most worthy of thy thoughts and pursuits were overlooked; and empty shadows eagerly pursued. Thy own heart will now feelingly tell thee, it was not want of capacity, but inclination, that cut thee off from blessedness. Thou wilt now bethink thyself, that when life and immortality were brought to light before thy eyes in the gospel, and thou wast told of this future blessedness of the saints, and pressed to follow holiness, as without which thou couldst not see God; it was a reasonable man was spoken to, that had a power to understand, and judge and choose; not a stone or a brute. Thy capacity of this blessedness makes thee capable also of the most exquisite torment; and reflected on, actually infers it. How passionately, but vainly, wilt thou then cry out, "O that I had filled up the place of any, the meanest creature throughout the whole creation of God, that I had been a gnat, or a fly, or had never been, rather than to have so noble, abused powers eternally to reckon for! Yea, and thou must reckon for not only the actual light, and good impressions thou hadst, but even all thou wast capable of and mightest have attained. Thou shalt now recount with anguish and horror (and rend thy own soul with the thoughts) what thou mightest now have been; how excellent and glorious a creature! hadst thou not contrived

thy own misery, and conspired with the devil against thyself, how to deform and destroy thy own soul. While this remembrance shall always afresh return, that nothing was enjoined thee as a duty, or propounded as thy blessedness, but what thou wast made capable of; and that it was not fatal necessity, but a wilful choice made thee miserable.

CHAP. XII.

Inference 3. That a change of heart is necessary to this blessedness. The pretences of ungodly men, whereby they would avoid the necessity of this change. Five considerations proposed in order to the detecting the vanity of such pretences. A particular discussion and refutation of those pretences.

3. IT is a mighty change must pass upon the souls of men in order to their enjoyment of this blessedness. This equally follows from the consideration of the nature and substantial parts of it, as of the qualifying righteousness pre-required to it. A little reflection upon the common state and temper of men's spirits, will soon enforce an acknowledgement that the vision of God, and conformity to him, are things above their reach, and which they are never likely to take satisfaction in, or at all to savour, till they become otherwise disposed than before the renovating change they are. The text expresses no more in stating the qualified subject of this blessedness *in righteousness* than it evidently implies in the account it gives of this blessedness itself, that it lies in seeing God, and being satisfied with his likeness. As soon as it is considered, that the blessedness of souls is stated here, what can be a more obvious reflection than this; Lord, then how great a change must they undergo! what such souls be blessed in seeing and partaking the divine likeness, that never loved it! were so much his enemies! It is true they are naturally capable of it, which speaks their original excellency; but they are morally uncapable, that is, indisposed and averse, which as truly, and most sadly speaks their present vile-

ness; and the sordid, abject temper they now are of. They are destitute of no natural powers necessary to the attainment of this blessedness; but in the mean time have them so depraved by impure and vicious tinctures that they cannot relish it, or the means to it. They have reasonable souls furnished with intellective and elective faculties, but labouring under a manifold distemper and disaffection; that they cannot receive, they cannot savour the things of God, or what is spiritual. *Capax est noster animus, perfertur illo, si vitia non deprimunt: our mind is capable of any attainment were it not depraved by vice.* Sen: epist. 29. 1 Cor 2. 14. Rom. 8. 5. They want the ευθεσια (as we may express it,) the well-disposedness for the kingdom of God, intimated Luke. 9 62. the ικανοτης, the meetness, the aptitude, or idoneity for the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. 1. 12.

A settled aversion from God hath fastened its roots in the very spirit of their minds (for that is stated as the prime subject of the change to be made Eph. 4. 23.) and how can they take pleasure then in the vision and participation of his glory? Whereas by beholding the glory of the Lord, they should be changed into the same image: a vail is upon the heart till it turn to the Lord, as was said concerning the Jews, 2 Cor. 3. 14. The God of this world hath blinded their minds, lest (that transforming light) the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them, chap. 4. 4. They are alienated from the life of God, through their ignorance and blindness of heart. The life they choose is to be αθεοι εν κοσμω, atheists, or without God in the world. Ephe. 2. 12. They like not to retain God in their knowledge. (Rom. 1. 28.) are willingly ignorant of him, (2. Pet. 3. 5.) say to him, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of the ways." (Job. 21. 14.) The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if any will understand, if any will seek after God; and the result of the enquiry is, there is none that doth good, no not one. Psal. 53. 3. They are haters of God, as our Saviour accused the Jews, (John. 15. 23.) and saint Paul the Gentiles, are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. (Rom. 1. 21.)Their understandings are dark, their minds vain, their wills obstinate, their consciences seared, their hearts hard and dead, their lives one continued rebellion against God and a defiance to heaven. At how vast a distance are such souls from such blessedness! The notion and nature of blessedness must sure be changed, or the temper of their spirits. Either they must have new hearts created, or a new heaven, if ever they be happy. And such is the stupid dotage of vain man, he can more easily persuade himself to believe, that the sun itself should be transformed into a

dunghill, that the holy God should lay aside his nature, and turn heaven into a place of impure darkness; than that he himself should need to undergo a change. O the powerful infatuation of self-love, that men in the gall of bitterness should think it is well with their spirits, and fancy themselves in a case good enough to enjoy divine pleasure; that (as the toad's venom offends not itself) their loathsome wickedness, which all good men detest, is a pleasure to them; and while it is as the poison of asps under their lips, they roll it as a dainty bit, revolve it in their thoughts with delight! Their wickedness speaks itself out to the very hearts of others, (Psal. 36. 1. 2.) while it never affects their own, and is found out to be hateful, while they still continue flattering themselves. And because they are without spot in their own eyes; they adventure so high, as to presume themselves so in the pure eyes of God too; and instead of designing to be like God, they already imagine him such a one as themselves. Psal. 50. Hence their allotment of time (in the whole of it, the Lord knows little enough) for the working out of their salvation spends apace; while they do not so much as understand their business. Their measured hour is almost out; an immense eternity is coming on upon them; and lo! they stand as men that cannot find their hands. Urge them to the speedy, serious endeavour of a heart-change, earnestly to intend the business of regeneration, of becoming new creatures; they seem to understand it as little, as if they were spoken to in an unknown tongue; and are in the like posture with the confounded builders of babel, they know not what we mean, or would put them upon. They wonder what we would have them do. "They are (say they) orthodox christians: they believe all the articles of the Christian creed: they detest all heresy and false doctrine: they are no strangers to the house of God; but diligently attend the enjoined solemnities of public worship: some possibly can say, they are sober, just, charitable, peaceable; and others that can boast less of their virtues, yet say, they are sorry for their sins, and pray God to forgive them." And if we urge them concerning their translation from the state of nature to that of grace, their becoming new creatures, their implantation into Christ: they say they have been baptized, and therein regenerate, and what would we have more?

But to how little purpose is it to equivocate with God? to go about to put a fallacy upon the Judge of spirits? or escape the animadversion of his fiery, flaming eye? or elude his determinations, and pervert the true intent and meaning of his most established constitutions and laws. Darest thou venture thy soul upon it? that this is all God means, by having a new heart created, a right spirit renewed in us: by being made God's work-

manship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works: by becoming new creatures, old things being done away, all things made new: by so learning the truth as it is in Jesus, to the putting off the old man, and putting on the new; which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness; by being begotten of God's own will by the word of truth; to be (the απαρχη) the chief excellency, the prime glory (as certainly his new creature is his best creature,) the first fruits, or the devoted part of all his creatures; by having Christ formed in us; by partaking the divine nature, the incorruptible seed, the seed of God; by being born of God, spirit of Spirit; as of earthly parents we are born flesh of flesh.* When my eternal blessedness lies upon it, had I not need to be sure that I hit the true meaning of these scriptures? especially, that at least I fall not below it, and rest not in any thing short of what Scripture makes indispensably necessary to my entering into the kingdom of God? I professedly wave controversies; and it is pity so practical a business as this I am now upon, and upon which salvation so much depends, should ever have been encumbered with any controversy. And therefore, though I shall not digress so far, as to undertake a particular and distinct handling here of this work of God upon the soul, yet, I shall propound something in general, touching the change necessarily previous to this blessedness, (wherein that necessity is evidenceable from the nature of this blessedness which is the business I have in hand) that I hope will pass among christians for acknowledged truth, not liable to dispute, though the Lord knows it be little considered. My design being rather to awaken souls to the consideration of known and agreed things, than to perplex them about unknown. Consider therefore:

(1.) That the holy Scriptures, in the forementioned and other like passages, do plainly hold forth the necessity of a real change to be made in the inward temper and dispositions of the soul; and not a relative only, respecting its state. This cannot be doubted by any that acknowledge a real inherent depravation, propagated in the nature of man. No, nor denied by them that grant such a corruption to be general and continued among men; whether by imitation only, or what way soever. And willing I am to meet men upon their own principles and concessions, however erroneous or short of the truth they may be, while they are yet improvable to their own advantage. Admit that regeneration, or the new-birth includes a change of our relation and state God-ward; doth it therefore exclude an intrin-

* Psal. 51. Eph. 2. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Eph. 4. 23. 24. Jam. 1 18. Gal. 4. 19. 2 Pet. 1. 4. Pet. 1. Joh. 3. 6.

sic, subjective change of the inclinations and tendencies of the soul? And if it did, yet other terms are more peculiarly appropriate to, and most expressly point out this very change alone; as that of conversion, or of turning to God; of being renewed in the spirit of the mind; of putting off the old man that is currupt by, &c. and putting on the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness, &c. of partaking the divine nature; it matters not if this or that expression be understood by some, more principally in another sense, the thing itself, of which we speak, is as clearly expressed, and as urgently pressed (as there was cause) as any other matter whatsoever throughout the whole book of God. But men are slower of belief, as to this great article of the Christian doctrine, than to most (I might say any) other. This truth more directly assaults the strong holds of the devil in the hearts of men, and is of more immediate tendency to subvert his kingdom; therefore they are most unwilling to have it true, and most hardly believe it. Here they are so madly bold, as to give the lie to all divine revelations; and though they are never so plainly told without holiness none shall see God, they will yet maintain the contrary belief and hope till, "Go ye cursed," vindicate the truth of God, and the flame of hell be their eternal confutation. Lord! that so plain a thing will not enter into the hearts of men; that so urgent inculcations will not yet make them apprehend that their souls must be renewed or perish! that they will still go dreaming on with that mad conceit, that (whatever the word of God says to the contrary) they may yet with unsanctified hearts get to heaven! How deplorable is the case, when men have no other hope left them, but that the God of truth will prove false, and belie his word; yea, and overturn the nature of things to save them in their sins! Thou that livest under the gospel, hast thou any pretence for thy seeming ignorance in this matter? couldst thou ever look one quarter of an hour into the Bible, and not meet with some intimation of this truth? What was the ground of thy mistake? What hath beguiled thee into so mischievous a delusion? How could such an imagination have place in thy soul: that a child of wrath by nature could become a child of God without receiving a new nature; that so vast a change could be made in thy state, without any at all in the temper of thy spirit.

(2.) Consider, that this change is in its own nature, and the design of God who works it, dispositive of the soul for blessedness. It is sufficiently evident from the consideration of the state itself of the unrenewed soul, that a change is necessary for this end; such a soul in which it is not wrought, when once its drowsy, stupifying slumber is shaken off, and its

reflecting power awakened, must needs be a perpetual torment to itself. So far it is removed from blessedness, it is its own hell and can fly from misery and death no faster than from itself. Blessedness composes the soul, reduces it to a consistency; it infers or rather is a self-satisfaction, a well-pleasedness and contentment with ones self, enriched and filled with αυταρκεια the divine fulness. Hence it is at rest, not as being pent in, but contentedly dwelling with itself, and keeping within its own bounds of its own accord. The unrenewed soul can no more contain itself within its own terms or limits, is as little self-consistent, as a raging flame, or an impetuous tempest. Indeed its own lusts perpetually, as so many vultures, rend and tear it; and the more when they want external objects; then, as hunger, their fury is all turned inward; and they prey upon intestines, upon their own subject; but unto endless torment, not satisfaction. In what posture is this soul for rest and blessedness? The nature of this change sufficiently speaks its own design. It is an introduction of, the *primordia*, the *very principles* of blessedness. And Scripture as plainly speaks the design of God: He regenerates to the undefiled inheritance: makes meet for it: (1 Pet. 1. 3. 4.) works, forms, or fashions the soul unto that self-same thing, (Col. 1. 12.) namely to desire and groan after that blessed state; (2 Cor. 5. 5.) and consequently to acquiesce and rest therein. Therefore, vain man, that dreamest of being happy without undergoing such a change; how art thou trying thy skill to abstract a thing from itself? for the pre-required righteousness whereupon thou must be changed, and this blessedness are in kind and nature the same thing, as much as a child and a man. Thou pretendest thou woulst have that perfected which thou canst not endure should ever be begun; thou settest thyself to prevent and suppress what, in its own nature, and by divine ordination tend to the accomplishment of thy own pretended desires. Thou wouldst have the tree without ever admitting the seed or plant: thou wouldst have heat, and canst not endure the least warmth; so besotted a thing is a carnal heart!

(3.) That inasmuch as this blessedness consists in the satisfactory sight and participation of God's own likeness, unto whom the soul is habitually averse, this change must chiefly stand in its becoming holy or godly, or in the alteration of its dispositions and inclinations as to God. Otherwise the design and end of it is not attained. We are required to follow peace with all men, but here the accent is put, and *holiness*, without which no man shall see God, Heb. 12. 14. It is therefore a vain thing, in reference to what we have now under consideration, namely the possibility of attaining this blessedness, to speak of any other

changes that fall short of, or are of another kind from the right disposition of heart God-ward. This change we are now considering, is no other than the proper adequate impress of the gospel discovery upon men's spirits, as we have largely shewn the righteousness is, in which it terminates. The sum of that discovery is, that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, (2 Cor. 5. 18. 19.) the proper impress of it, therefore is the actual reconciliation of the soul to God through Christ; a friendly, well-affected posture of spirit towards God, our last end and highest good; and towards Christ our only way, since the apostacy, of attaining and enjoying it. To rest therefore in any other good dispositions or endowments of mind, is as much besides the business, as impertinent to the present purpose, as if one designed to the government of a city, should satisfy himself that he hath the skill to play well on a lute, or he that intends physic, that he is well seen in architecture. The general scope and tenor of the gospel tells thee O man, plainly enough, what the business is thou must intend (if thou wilfully overlook it not) in order to thy blessedness. It is written to draw thee into fellowship with the Father and the Son, that thy joy may be full. 1 John. 1. 1. 4. It aims at the bringing of thee into a state of blessedness in God through Christ; and is therefore the instrument by which God would form thy heart thereto; the seal by which to make the first impression of his image upon thee, which will then as steadily incline and determine thy soul towards him; as the magnetic touch ascertains the posture of the needle. Wherefore doth he there discover his own heart, but to melt, and win, and transform thine? The word of grace is the seed of the new creature. Through the exceeding great and precious promises, he makes souls partake of the divine nature. Grace is, firstly revealed to teach the denial of of ungodlines, &c. Turn thy thoughts hither then, and consider what is there done upon thy soul by the gospel, to attemper and conform it to God? Wherein has thy heart answered this its visible design and intendment? Thou art but in a delirious dream till thou seriously bethinkest thyself of this. For otherwise how can the aversion of thy heart from him escape thy daily observation; thou canst not be without evidences of it; what pleasure dost thou take in retiring thyself with God; what care to redeem time only for converse with him? hadst thou not rather be any where else? In a time of vacancy from business and company, when thou hast so great a variety of things before thee, among which to choose an object for thy thoughts, do they not naturally fall upon any thing rather than God? Nor do thou think to shift off this by assigning the mere natural cause; for if there were not somewhat more in the matter, why

is it not so with all? He upon whom this change had passed could say; My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches. My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord. How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them? If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with thee. Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O God, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early, &c. * Therefore plain it is, there is a sinful distemper to be wrought out, an ungodly disposition of he art, which it concerns thee, not to rest till thou see removed.

(4.) Consider, that to become godly, or this change of inclinations and dispositions towards God, is that which of all other the soul doth most strongly reluctate and strive against; and which therefore it undergoes with greatest difficulty and regret. It is a horrid and amazing thing it should be so, but Scripture and experience leave it undoubted that so it is. What! that the highest excellency, the most perfect beauty, loveliness, and love itself should so little attract a reasonable, spiritual being that issued thence? His own offspring so unkind! what more than monstrous unnaturalness is this, so to disaffect one's own original! It were easy to accumulate and heap up considerations that would render this astonishly strange. So things are reckoned upon several accounts, either as they are more rare and unfrequent (which is the vulgar way of estimating wonders) or as their causes are of more difficult investigation; or (if they are moral wonders) as they are more unreasonable or causeless; upon this last account, Christ marvelled at the Jews unbelief; (Mark 6. 6.) and so is this hatred justly marvellous; as being altogether without a cause? But thence to infer there is no such thing, were to dispute against the sun. No truth hath more of light and evidence in it, though none more of terror and prodigy To how many thousand objects is the mind of man indifferent? can turn itself to this or that; run with facility all points of the compass, among the whole universe of beings: but assay only to draw it to God, and it recoils; thoughts and affections revolt, and decline all converse with that blessed object! Toward other objects, it freely opens and dilates itself, as under the benign beams of a warm sun; there are placid, complacential emotions; amicable, sprightly converses and embraces. Towards

* Psal. 63. 5. 6.—104. 34.——139. 17. 18. Isa, 26. 8.

God only it is presently contracted and shut up; life retires, and it becomes as a stone, cold, rigid and impenetrable: the quite contrary to what is required (which also those very precepts do plainly imply;) it is alive to sin, to the world, to vanity; but crucified, mortified, dead to God and Jesus Christ. Rom. 6. 11.

The natures of many men that are harsh, fierce and savage, admit of many cultivations and refinings; and by moral precept, the exercise and improvement of reason, with a severe animadversion and observance of themselves, they become mild, tractable, gentle, meek. The story of the physiognomist's guess at the temper of Socrates is known. But of all other, the disaffected soul is least inclinable ever to become good-natured towards God, wherein grace or holiness doth consist. Here it is most unpersuadable, never facile to this change. One would have thought no affection should have been so natural, so deeply inwrought into the spirit of man, as an affection towards the Father of spirits; but here he most of all discovers himself to be without natural affection: surely here is a sad proof, that such affection doth not ascend. The whole duty of man, as to the principle of it, resolves into love. That is the fulfilling of the law. As to its object; the two tables divide it between God and our neighbour; and accordingly divide that love. Upon those two branches whereof; love to God, and love to our neighbour, hang all the law and the prophets. The wickedness of the world hath killed this love at the very root, and indisposed the nature of man to all exercises of it, either way, whether towards God or his neighbour. It hath not only rendered man unmeet for holy communion with God, but in a great measure for civil society with one another. It hath destroyed good nature: made men false, envious, barbarous; turned the world; especially the dark places of the earth, where the light of the gospel shines not, into habitations, of cruelty. But who sees not the enmity and disaffection of men's hearts towards God is the more deeply rooted, and less superable evil?

The beloved apostle gives us a plain and sad intimation how the case is, as to this, when he reasons thus; He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? He argues from the less to the greater; and this is the ground upon which his argument is built: that the loving of God is a matter of greater difficulty, and from which the spirit of man is more remote, than loving of his neighbour. And he withall insinuates an account why it is so; God's remoteness from our sense, which is indeed a cause, but no excuse: it is a peccant, faulty cause. For is our so gross sensuallity no sin? that nothing should affect our hearts, but what we can see

with our eyes? as if our sense were the only measure or judge of excellencies. We are not all flesh, what have we done with our souls? if we cannot see God with our eyes, why do we not with our minds? at least so much of him we might, as to discern his excellency above all things else. How come our souls to lose their dominion, and to be so slavishly subject to a ruling sense; but the reason less concerns our present purpose; that whereof it is the reason; that implied assertion, that men are in a less disposition to the love of God than their neighbours, is the sad truth we are now considering. There are certain homiletical virtues that much adorn and polish the nature of man, urbanity, fidelity, justice, patience of injuries, compassion towards the miserable, &c. and indeed without these, the world would break up, and all civil societies disband; if at least they did not in some degree obtain. But in the mean time men are at the greatest distance imaginable from any disposition to society with God. They have some love for one another, but none for him. And yet it must be remembered, that love to our neighbour, and all the consequent exertions of it, becoming duty by the divine law, ought to be performed as acts of obedience to God, and therefore ought to grow from the stock and root of a divine love; I mean, love to God. They are otherwise but spurious virtues, bastard fruits (men gather not grapes of thorns, &c.) they grow from a tree of another kind; and whatever semblance they may have of the true, they want their constituent form, their life and soul. Though love to the brethren is made a character of the regenerate state, of having passed from death to life; 1 John. 3. 14. it is yet but a more remote, and is itself brought to trial by this higher and more immediate one, and which is more intimately connatural to the new creature, even the love of God; By this we know we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. chap. 5. 2. A respect to God *specifies every virtue and duty. Whatever is loved and served, and not in him and for him (*servato ordine finis, keeping the chosen end in view*, as the school-phrase is) becomes an idol; and that love and service is idolatry. And what a discovery is here of disaffection to God; that in the exercise of such (the above-mentioned) virtues, one single act shall be torn from itself, from its specifying moral form, only to leave out him. A promise shall be kept, but without any respect to God, for even the promises made to him are broken without any

* Proinde virtutes quas sibi videtur habere, nisi ad Deum retulerit, etiam ipsa vitia sunt potius quam virtutes. Whatever virtues a man may seem to himself to possess, if he do not refer them all to God they are vices, rather then virtues.

scruple. That which is anothers shall be rendered to him; but God shall not be regarded in the business. An alms given, for the Lord's sake left out. That which concerns my neighbour often done, but what concerns God therein, as it were studiously omitted. This is what he that runs may read, that though the hearts of men are not to one another as they should, they are much more averse towards God.

Men are easier of acquaintance towards one another, they slide insensibly into each others bosoms; even the most churlish, morose natures are wrought upon by assiduous repeated kindnesses, *gutta cavat lapidem, &c.* as often-falling drops at length wear and work into very stones: towards God their hearts are more impenetrable than rocks, harder than adamants. He is seeking with some an acquaintance all their days: they live their whole age under the gospel, and yet are never won. They hearken to one another, but are utterly unpersuadable towards God; as the deaf adder that hears not the voice of the charmer though charming never so wisely. The clearest reason, the most powerful arguments move them not: no nor the most insinuative allurements, the sweetest breathings of love: "How often would I have gathered thee, as the hen her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." God draws with the cords of a man, with the bands of love: but they still perversely keep at an unkind distance.* Men use to believe one another (were there no credit given to each others words, and some mutual confidence in one another, there could be no human converse, all must affect solitude, and dwell in dens and desarts as wild beasts,) but how incredulous are they of all divine revelations? though testified with never so convincing evidence! Who hath believed our report! The word of the eternal God is regarded (O amazing wickedness) as we would the word of a child or a fool; no sober, rational man, but his narrations, promises or threatenings, are more reckoned of. Men are more reconcilable to one another when enemies, more constant when friends. How often doth the power of a conquering enemy, and the distress of the conquered, work a submission on this part, and a remission on that. How often are haughty spirits stooped by a series of calamities, and made ductile; proud arrogants formed, by necessity and misery, into humble supplicants, so as to lie prostrate at the feet of a man that may help or hurt them; while still the same persons retain indomitable unyielding spirits towards God, under their most afflictive pressures. Though his gracious nature and infinite fulness promise the most certain

* Mat. 23. 37. See Psal. 81. 8. to 13. Prov. 1. 20. to 24. &c. Hos. 11. 4.

and liberal relief, it is the remotest thing from their thoughts to make any address to him. They cry because of the oppression of the mighty, but none says Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night? (Job 35. 10.) rather perish under their burdens than look towards God, when his own visible hand is against them, or upon them, and their lives at his mercy; they stand it out to the last breath; and are more hardly humbled than consumed; sooner burn than weep; shriveled up into ashes sooner than melted into tears; scorched with great heat yet repent not to give glory to God: Rev. 16. 9. gnaw their tongues for pain, and yet still more disposed to blaspheme than pray or sue for mercy. Dreadful thought! as to one another reconciliations among men are not impossible or unfrequent, even of mortal enemies; but they are utterly implacable towards God! yet they often wrong one another; but they cannot pretend, God ever did them the least wrong, yea, they have lived by his bounty all their days. They say to God, "Depart from us," yet he filleth their houses with good things. So true is the historian's* observation, "Hatred is sharpest where most unjust."

Yea, when there seems at least to have been a reconciliation wrought, are treacheries, covenant-breakings, revolts, strangeness, so frequent among men towards one another, as from them towards God? How inconsistent with friendship is it, according to common estimate, to be always promising, never performing; upon any or no occasion to break off intercourses, by unkind alienations, or mutual hostilities; to be morose, reserved each to other; to decline or disaffect each others converse; to shut out one another from their hearts and thoughts. But how common and unregretted are these carriages towards the blessed God? It were easy to expatiate on this argument, and multiply instances of this greater disaffection. But in a word, what observing person may not see, what serious person would not grieve to see the barbarous, sooner putting on civility; the riotous, sobriety; the treacherous, fidelity; the morose, urbanity; the injurious, equity; the churlish and covetous, benignity and charity; than the ungodly man, piety and sincere devotedness unto God? Here is the principal wound and distemper sin hath infected the nature of man with: Though he have suffered a universal impairment, he is chiefly prejudiced in regard of his hatred and tendency towards God; and what concerns the dubut of the first table. Here the breach is greatest, and here is ties greatest need of repair. True it is; an inoffensive, winning

* Tacitus speaking of the hatred of Tiberius and Augusta against Germanicus, the causers whereof, saith he, were acriores, quia iniquæ.

deportment towards men, is not without its excellency, and necessity too. And it doth indeed unsufferably reproach Christianity, and unbecome a disciple of Christ; yea it discovers a man not to be led by his Spirit, and so to be none of his; to indulge himself in immoral deportment towards men; to be undutiful towards superiors; unconversable towards equals: oppressive towards inferiors; unjust towards any. Yet is a holy disposition of heart towards God, most earnestly, and in the first place to be endeavoured (which will then draw on the rest,) as having in it the highest equity and excellency, and being of the most immediate necessity to our blessedness.

(5.) Consider, that there may be some gradual tendencies, or fainter essays towards godliness, that fall short of real godliness, or come not up to that thorough change and determination of heart God-ward, that is necessary to blessedness. There may be a returning, but not to the most high, wherein man may be (as the prophet immediately subjoins Hos. 7. 16.) like a deceitful bow, not fully bent, that will not reach the mark; they come not home to God. Many may be almost persuaded; and even within reach of heaven, not far from the kingdom of God; may seek to enter, and not be able; their hearts being somewhat inclinable, but more averse; for they can only be unable as they are unwilling. The soul is in no possibility of taking up a complacential rest in God, till it be brought to this, to move toward him spontaneously and with, as it were, a self-motion. And then is it self-moved towards God, when its preponderating bent is towards him. As a massy stone that one attempts to displace, if it be heaved at till it preponderate, it then moves out by its own weight; otherwise it reverts, and lies where and as it did before. So it is with many men's hearts, all our lifting at them, is but the rolling of the returning stone; they are moved, but not removed: sometimes they are lifted at in the public ministry of the world; sometimes by a private, seasonable admonition; sometimes God makes an affliction his minister; a danger startles them; a sickness shakes them; and they think to change their course: but how soon do they change those thoughts, and are where they were? what enlightenings and convictions, what awakenings and terror, what remorses, what purposes, what tastes and relishes do some find in their own hearts, that yet are blasted and come to nothing? How many miserable abortions after travailing pangs and throws, and fair hopes of a happy birth of the new creature? Often somewhat is produced that much resembles it, but is not it. No gracious principle but may have its counterfeit in an ungracious heart; whence they deceive not others only, but themselves, and think verily they are true converts while they are yet in their sins. How many

wretched souls, that lie dubiously struggling a long time under the contrary alternate impressions of the gospel on the one hand, and the present evil world on the other; and give the day to their own sensual inclinations at last! in some degree, escape the corruptions of the world, by the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but are again entangled and overcome, so as their latter end is worse than their beginning. 2 Pet. 2. 20. Such a man is so far from being advantaged by his former faint inclinations towards God, that he would be found at last under this aggravated wickedness beyond all other men; that when others wandered from God through inadvertency and inconsideration, this man will be found to have been his enemy upon deliberation, and against the various strivings of his convinced heart to the contrary. This is more eminently victorious and reigning enmity; such a one takes great pains to perish. Alas! it is not a slight touch, an overly superficial tincture, some evanid sentiments of piety, a few good thoughts or wishes, that bespeak a new man, a new creature. It is a thorough prevailing change, that quite alters the habitual posture of a man's soul, and determines it towards God, so as that the after-course of his life may be capable of that denomination, a living to God, a living after the Spirit; that exalts the love of God unto that supremacy in him, that it becomes the governing principle of his life, and the reason and measure of his actions; that as he loves him above all things else, better than his own life, so he can truly (though possibly sometimes with a doubtful, trembling heart) resolve the ordinary course of his daily walking and practice into that love, as the directive principle of it. I pray, I read, I hear, because I love God. I desire to be just, sober, charitable, meek, patient, because I love God. This is the perfection and end of the love of God, (therefore that must needs be the principle hereof) obedience to his will. 1 John. 2. 5. Τετελειωται Herein appears that power of godliness, denied (God knows) by too many that have the form: the spirit of love, power, and of a sound mind. 2 Tim. 3. 5. chap. 1. 7. That only is a sound mind, in which such love rules in such power. Is not love to God often pretended by such that, whenever it comes to an actual competition, discover they love their own flesh a great deal more; that seldom ever cross their own wills to do his? or hazard their own fleshly interest to promote his interest? we may justly say (as the apostle, in a case fitly enough reducible hither,) how dwells the love of God in that man? Notwithstanding such a subdued ineffectual love to God, such a one shall be denominated and dealt with as an enemy. It is not likely any man on earth hates God so perfectly as those in hell. And is not every quality, not yet perfect in its kind, and that

is yet growing more and more intense, in the mean time allayed by some degree of its contrary? Yet that over-mastered degree denominates not its subject, nor ought a man from such a supposed love to God to have the name of a lover of him. That principle is only capable of denominating the man, that is prevalent and practical, that hath a governing influence on his heart and life. He in whom the love of God hath not such power and rule, whatever his fainter inclinations, may be, is an ungodly man.

And now methinks these several considerations compared and weighed together, should contribute something to the settling of right thoughts in the minds of secure sinners, touching the nature and necessity of this heart-change; and do surely leave no place for the forementioned vain pretences that occasioned them. For (to give you a summary view of what hath been propounded in those foregoing considerations,) it now plainly appears,—That the holy Scripture requires in him that shall enjoy this blessedness, a mighty change of the very temper of his soul, as that which must dispose him thereto; and which must therefore chiefly consist, in the right framing of his heart towards God; towards whom it is mostly, fixedly averse, and therefore not easily susceptible of such a change. And that any slighter or more feeble inclination towards God, will not serve the turn; but such only whereby the soul is prevalently and habitually turned to him. And then what can be more absurd or unsavoury? what more contrary to Christian doctrine, or common reason, than instead of this necessary heart-change, to insist upon so poor a plea, as that mentioned above, as the only ground of so great a hope? How empty and frivolous will it appear in comparison of this great soul-transforming change, if we severally consider the particulars of it. As for orthodoxy in doctrinals, it is in itself a highly laudable thing; and in respect of the fundamentals (for therefore are they so called) indispensably necessary to blessedness. As that cannot be without holiness, so nor holiness without truth. John. 17. 17. But, (besides that this is that which every one pretends to) is every thing which is necessary, sufficient? As to natural necessity (which is that we now speak to) reason, and intellectual nature are also necessary; shall therefore all men, yea, and devils too, be saved? Besides, are you sure you believe the grand articles of the Christian religion? Consider a little,—the grounds and effects of that pretended faith.

(1.) Its grounds; every assent is as the grounds of it are. Deal truly here with thy soul. Can you tell wherefore you are a christian? what are thy inducements to be of this religion? are they not such as are common to thee with them that are of a

false religion? (I am here happily prevented by a worthy author*, to which I recommend thee, but at the present a little bethink thyself,) Is it not possible thou mayest be a christian for the same reasons for which one may be a jew, or a mahometan, or a mere pagan? as namely, education, custom, law, example, outward advantage, &c. Now consider, if thou find this upon enquiry to be thy case, the motives of thy being a christian admit of being cast together into this form of reasoning. That religion which a man's forefathers were of, which is established by law, or generally obtains in the country where he lives, the profession whereof, most conduces to, or best consists with his credit, and other outward advantages, that religion he is to embrace as the true religion. But such I find the Christian religion to be to me; therefore, &c. The proposition here is manifestly false; for it contains grounds common to all religions, publicly owned, and professed throughout the world; and sure all cannot be true: and hence the conclusion (though materially considered it be true, yet) formally considered, as a conclusion issuing from such premises, must needs be false; and what then is become of thy orthodoxy; when, as to the formal object of thy faith, thou believest but as mahometans and pagans do? when thou art of this faith, by fate or chance only, not choice or rational inducement?

(2.) As to the effects of thy faith: let them be enquired into also, and they will certainly bear proportion to the grounds of it. The gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes; (Rom. 1. 16. 1 Thes. 2. 13.) to them that believe it not, it signifies nothing. The word of God received with a divine faith, as the word of God, works effectually upon all that so receive it, that is, all that believe. What such efficacious workings of it hast thou felt upon thy soul? Certainly, its most connatural effect is that very change of heart, and inclination God-ward, of which we have been speaking. What is so suitable to the gospel-revelation, as a good temper of heart God-ward? And how absurd is it to introduce the cause on purpose to exclude its genuine inseparable effect? But evident it is, (though true faith cannot,) that superficial, irrational assent, in which alone many glory, may too well consist with a disaffected heart towards God: and can it then signify any thing towards thy blessedness? sure to be so a solifidian is to be a nullifidian. Faith not working by love is not faith; at least profits nothing. For thy outward conformity in the solemnities of worship, it is imputable to so corrupt motives and principles, that the thing itself, abtractively considered,

* Mr. Pink's trial of sincere love to Christ.

can never be thought characteristical and distinguishing of the heirs of blessedness. The worst of men, may perform the best of outward duties. Thy most glorious boasted virtues, if they grow not from the proper root, love to God, they are but splendid sins, as above appears, and hath been truly said of old. Thy repentance is either true or false; if true, it is that very change of mind and heart I speak of, and is therefore eminently signalized by that note, it is repentance towards God; if false, God will not be mocked. For thy regeneration in baptism; what can it avail thee, as to this blessedness, if the present temper of thy heart be unsuitable, thereto? Didst thou ever know any that held, that all the baptized should be saved? Will thy infant sanctity excuse the enmity and disaffection to God of thy riper age?

In short, if we seclude this work of God upon the soul, how inconsiderable is the difference between the Christian and the heathen world? wherein can it then be understood to lie, but in some ineffectual notions, and external observances? And can it be thought that the righteous, holy God will make so vast a difference in the states of men hereafter, who differ so little here? or that it shall so highly recommend a man to God, that it was his lot to be born, and to have lived upon such a turf or soil, or in such a clime or part of the world? His gracious providence is thankfully to be acknowledged and adored, that hath assigned us our stations under the gospel; but then it must be remembered, the gospel hath the goodness, not of the end, but of the means; which, as by our improvement or non-improvement, it becomes effectual or ineffectual, doth acquit from, or aggravate condemnation: and that it works not as a charm or spell, we know not how, or why, or when we think not of it; but by recommending itself in the demonstration and power of the Holy Ghost, to our reason and consciences, to our wills and affections, till we be delivered up into the mould or form of it. Rom. 6. 17. Surely were it so slight a matter, as too many fondly dream, that must distinguish between them that shall be saved and shall perish, there would need no striving to enter in at the strait gate; and the disciples question would never have been, who then shall be saved? but rather, who shall not be saved? nor would it have been resolved by our Saviour into the immediate power of him alone, to whom all things are possible (Matt. 19.26.) that any are saved at all; nor have been so earnestly asserted by him, that none could come to him, but whom his Father draws. John. 6.44. The obvious import of which passages is such, that if careless sinners could once obtain of themselves seriously to consider them, methinks they would find little rest in their spirits, till they might discern a work wrought

there, in some degree worthy of God, an impression some way proportionable to the power of an almighty arm; and that might speak God its author. For notwithstanding the soul's natural capacities before asserted and inferred, its *moral incapacity, I mean its wicked aversion from God, is such as none but God himself can overcome. Nor is that aversation the less culpable, for that it is so hardly overcome, but the more. It is an aversation of will; and who sees not, that every man is more wicked, according as his will is more wickedly bent? Hence his impotency or inability to turn to God, is not such as that he cannot turn if he would; but it consists in this, that he is not willing. He affects a distance from God. Which shews therefore the necessity still of this change. For the possibility of it, and the encouragement (according to the methods wherein God is wont to dispense his grace) the sinner hath to hope and endeavour it, will more fitly fall into consideration elsewhere.

* That moral incapacity is also in some sense truly natural, that is, in the same sense wherein we are said to be by nature the children of wrath, Eph. 2, 3. Therefore human nature must be considered as created by God, and as propagated by man. In the former sense, as God is the author of it, it is taken in this distinction, of moral and natural impotency, which needs not further explication; yet you may take this account of it from Dr. Twisse, Impotentia faciendi quod Deo gratum est et acceptum, non est impotentia naturæ, sed morum. Nulla etenim nobis deest facultas naturæ per peccatum originale, juxta illud Augustini; Nulli agnoscendi veritatis abstulit facultatem. Adhuc remanet potentia, qua facere possumus quæcunque volumus: the inability to do what is pleasing and acceptable to God; is not a natural but moral inability For no faculty of our nature is taken away from us by original sin (as saith Augustine,) it has taken from no man the faculty of discerning truth. The power still remains by which we can do whatsoever we choose. Vind. I. 3. errat. 9. sect. 6. Naturalem potentiam, quidlibet agendi pro arbitrio ipsorum, dicimus ad omnes transmitti, non autem potentiam moralem: we say that the natural power of doing anything according to our will is preserved to all, but not moral power. Vindic. Criminat. 3. S. 1. digr. 2. Chap. 3.

CHAP. XIII.

4 Inference. That the soul in which such a change is wrought, restlessly pursues this blessedness till it be attained. 5 Inference. That the knowing of God, and conformity to him, are satisfying things, and do now in a degree satisfy, according to the measure wherein they are attained. 6 Inference That the love of God towards his people is great, that hath designed for them so great, and even a satisfying good.

4. IT is further to be inferred, that a soul wherein such a change is wrought, pursues this blessedness with restless, supreme desire, till it attain to the fulness thereof. We have here a plainly implied description of the posture and tendency of such a soul (even of a sanctified holy soul, which had therefore undergone this blessed change) towards this state of blessedness. I shall (saith he) be satisfied with thy likeness, as though he had said, I cannot be satisfied otherwise. We have seen how great a change is necessary to dispose the soul to this blessedness, which being once wrought, nothing else can now satisfy it. Such a thing is this blessedness, (I speak now of so much of it as is previous and conducing to satisfaction, or of blessedness materially considered, the divine glory to be beheld and participated:) it is of that nature, it makes the soul restless, it lets it not be quiet, after it hath got some apprehension of it, till it attain the full enjoyment. The whole life of such a one, is a continual seeking God's face. So attractive is this glory of a subject rightly disposed to it: while others crave corn and wine, this is the sum of the holy soul's desires, Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance, &c. Psal. 4. 6. The same thing is the object of its present desires that shall be of its eternal satisfaction and enjoyment. This is now its one thing, the request insisted on, to behold the beauty of the Lord, &c. (Psal. 27. 4.) and while in any measure it doth so, yet it is still looking for this blessed hope, still hoping to be like him, see him as he is. The expectation of satisfaction in this state, implies the restless working of desire till then; for what is this satisfaction, but the fulfilling of our desires, the perfecting of

the soul's motions in a complacential rest? Motion and rest do exactly correspond each to other. Nothing can naturally rest in any place, to which it was not before naturally inclined to move. And the rest is proportionably more composed and steady, according as the motion was stronger and more vigorous. By how much the heavier any body is, so much the stronger and less resistable is its motion downward; and then accordingly it is less movable when it hath attained its resting place. It is therefore a vanity and contradiction, to speak of the soul's being satisfied in that which it was not before desirous of*. And that state which it shall ultimately and eternally acquiesce in (with a rest that must therefore be understood to be most composed and sedate,) towards it, it must needs move with the strongest and most unsatisfied desire, a desire that is supreme, prevalent, and triumphant over all other desires, and over all obstructions to itself; least capable of diversion, or of pitching upon any thing short of the term aimed at. Ask therefore the holy soul, What is thy supreme desire? and so far as it understands itself, it must answer, "To see and partake the divine glory; to behold the blessed face of God, till his likeness be transfused through all my powers, and his entire image be perfectly formed in me: present to my view what else you will, I can be satisfied in nothing else but this." Therefore this leaves a black note upon those wretched souls that are wholly strangers to such desires; that would be better satisfied to dwell always in dust; that shun the blessed face of God as hell itself; and to whom the most despicable vanity is a more desirable sight than that of divine glory. Miserable souls! Consider your state, can that be your blessedness which you desire not? or do you think God will receive any into his blessed presence, to whom it shall be a burden? Methinks, upon the reading of this you should presently doom yourselves, and see your sentence written in your breast. Compare your hearts with this holy man's; see if there be any thing like this in the temper of your spirits; and never think well of yourselves till you find it so.

5. The knowledge of God, and conformity to him, are in their own nature apt to satisfy the desires of the soul, and even now actually do so, in the measure wherein they are attained. Some things are not of a satisfying nature; there is nothing tending

* Aptitudinally, I mean, and exhypothesi, that is supposing the knowledge of the object: otherwise as to actual explicit desires, God doth give us beyond what we can ask or think. But it is impossible the soul should rest satisfied in that, which upon knowledge it is undesirous of, and doth or would reject.

to satisfaction in them. And then the continual heaping together of such things, doth no more towards satisfaction, than the accumulating of mathematical points would towards the compacting of a solid body; or the multiplication of cyphers only, to the making of a sum. But what shall one day satisfy, hath in itself a power and aptitude thereto. The act, whenever it is, supposes the power. Therefore the hungry-craving soul, that would fain be happy, but knows not how, needs not spend its days in making uncertain guesses, and fruitless attempts and trials: it may fix its hovering thoughts; and upon assurance here given, say, I have now found at last where satisfaction may be had; and have only this to do, to bend all my powers hither, and intend this one thing, the possessing myself of this blessed rest; earnestly to endeavour, and patiently to wait for it. Happy discovery! welcome tidings! I now know which way to turn my eye, and direct my pursuit. I shall no longer spend myself in dubious, toilsome wanderings, in anxious, vain enquiry, I have found! I have found! blessedness is here. If I can but get a lively, efficacious sight of God, I have enough—Shew me the Father, and it sufficeth. Let the weary, wandering soul bethink itself, and retire to God; He will not mock thee with shadows, as the world hath done. This is eternal life, to know him the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Apart from Christ thou canst not know nor see him with fruit and comfort; but the gospel revelation (which is the revelation of God in Christ) gives thee a lovely prospect of him. His glory shines in the face of Jesus Christ; and when by beholding it thou art changed into the same likeness, and findest thyself gradually changing more and more from glory to glory, thou wilt find thyself accordingly in a gradual tendency towards satisfaction and blessedness: that is, do but seriously set thyself to study and contemplate the being and attributes of God; and then look upon him as through the Mediator, he is willing to be reconciled to thee, and become thy God; and so long let thine eye fix and dwell here, till it affect thy heart, and the proper impress of the gospel be by the Spirit of the Lord instamped upon it; till thou find thyself wrought to a compliance with his holy will, and his image formed in thee; and thou shalt soon experience thou art entering into his rest; and wilt relish a more satisfying pleasure in this blessed change, than all thy worldly, sensual enjoyments did ever afford thee before.

Surely, if the perfect vision and perception of his glorious likeness will yield a complete satisfaction at last, the initial and progressive tendencies towards the former, will proportionably infer the latter. It is obvious hence to collect, who are in

this world (ordinarily and, *cæteris paribus*, where more unusual violent temptations hinder not) the most satisfied and contented persons; even those that have most of the clarifying sights of God, and that thence partake most of his image, (indeed Scripture only vouchsafes the name to such sights of God; He that doth evil hath not seen God, 1 John. 3. 6. 3 John. 11.) such as have most of a godly frame wrought into their spirits, and that have hearts most attempered and conformed to God; these are the most contended persons in the world. Content is part of the gain that attends godliness; it concurring, renders the other a great gain; godliness with contentment; (1. Tim. 6. 6.) the form of expression discovers how connatural contentment is to godliness; as if they were not to be mentioned apart. Godliness, as if he had said, is a very gainful thing, but if you would comprehend the gainfulness of it fully, do not abstract too curiously, take in with it that which is of so near an alliance, that you will hardly know how to consider them apart; let its inseparable adjunct, contentment, go along with it, and you will find it a gainful thing indeed. The true knowledge of God so directly tends to holiness, and that to contentation, that it may be too evidently concluded, that a discontented person hath little of the one or the other, not much knowledge and less grace; he is so far from being like God, that in the apostle's language above we may say, he hath not seen him. Doth that person know God, or hath ever seen him, that falls not into the dust, admiring so glorious a Majesty? that subjects not himself to him, with loyal affections, accounting it his only grand concernment to please and serve him? But the discontented person takes upon him, as if he were God alone, and as if he expected every creature to do him homage, and thought the creation were made for the pleasure and service of none but him. Hath that person ever seen God, that acknowledges him not a sufficient portion, a full, all-comprehending good? Hath he seen him, that sees not reason to trust him, to commit all his concernments to him? Hath he seen him that loves him not, and delights not in his love? Hath he seen him that quits not all for him, and abandons not every private interest to espouse his; and how evidently do these things tend to quiet and compose the soul! Discontent proceeds from idolizing thoughts of ourselves; it is rooted in self-conceit, in self-dependance, self-love, self-seeking, all which despicable idols (or that one great idol, *self*, thus variously served and idolized) one sight of the divine glory would confound and bring to nothing. The sights of God melt the heart, break it under a sense of sin, and hence compose it to a meek, peaceful

humility; but the discontented spirit is an unbroken, proud, imperious spirit. The sights of God purify the soul, refine it from the dross of this vile world, make it daily aspire to a conformity unto the pure and spiritual nature of God. But a discontented spirit, is a sensual, terrene spirit (for what, but such objects are the usual matter of most men's discontents?) taking sensuality in its just latitude, it is a low dunghill spirit, fit for nothing but to rake and scrabble in the dirt.

I insist upon this, apprehending (what deserves more lamentations than it hath observations,) that too many annex a profession of eminent godliness and spirituality, to an indulged, querulous, impatient temper of spirit; join a splendid appearance of piety, to an unreformed perverse frowardness (which agree as well as a jewel of gold to a swine's snout,) nothing pleases them, their mercies are not worth the acknowledgement; their afflictions intolerable, not to be borne. They fall out and quarrel with all occurrences, actions, events; neither man, nor God doth any thing good in their sight. The world is not well governed; nothing falls out well as to themselves. What can possibly be thought on more repugnant to the knowledge of God, the grand design of all religion, and the very spirit of the gospel, than this temper? Which way do these tend and aim, but to lead souls to blessedness; to bring them into a peaceful, happy, satisfied state and frame? and must we, because that end cannot be attained here, therefore go the quite contrary way? or pretend we are going to heaven with our backs turned upon it? Sure the discoveries God now makes of himself to us, and by which he impresses his likeness upon his own (though they ultimately design our satisfaction and blessedness in heaven, as intermediate thereunto;) they aim at the bringing us into a heaven upon earth; to form us unto a life agreeable, and that hath analogy with that of heaven; unto which nothing is more analogous in our present state, than that peace and serenity which result from divine knowledge and holiness; nothing more inconsistent, than a peevish, fretful, turbulent spirit. The one is a participation of a bright and mild light from heaven, the other, of a dark and raging fire from hell? It is only God's face, his glorious likeness reflected on our souls, that shall satisfy hereafter, and make heaven, heaven. He doth not now wholly conceal himself from us, not altogether hide his face. The shining of the same face (in what degree he now vouchsafes it) will make this earth a heaven too. One glance towards him may transmit a lively pleasant lustre upon our spirits, they looked on him, and were lightened, Psal. 34. 5. And we live in the expectation of clearer and more impressive eter-

nal visions. It will become us to express a present satisfiedness, proportionable to our present sights and expectations; and to endeavour daily to see more, and to be more like God: that we may be daily more and more satisfied; while we cannot yet attain, to be making gradual approaches towards that blessed state. By how much any have more of the vision and likeness of God in their present state, so much they approach nearer unto satisfaction.

6. We infer; The love of God to his people is great, which hath designed for them so great, and even a satisfying good. We cannot overlook the occasion this doctrine gives us, to consider and contemplate awhile the love of God. If this shall be the blessedness of his saints, it is a great love that shall be the spring and source of it. Two thing here before our eyes, discover thegreatness of his love:—that it designs satisfaction to the persons meant: and—that they shall be satisfied with the divine vision and likeness.

(1.) It designs their satisfaction. This is as far as love can go. It is love to the uttermost: it doth not satisfy itself, till it satisfy them. It is love to spare an enemy, to relieve a stranger; but to satisfy for ever them that were both; this sure exceeds all the wonted measures of love. Much love is shewn in the forgiveness of sin, in the supply of necessities; but herein (as the apostle speaks in another case) is the love of God perfected, as to its exercise: it hath now perfectly attained its end, when it hath not left so much as a craving desire, not a wish unsatisfied; the soul cannot say, "I wish it were better; O that I had but this one thing more to complete my happiness." It hath neither pretence nor inclination to think such a thought. Divine love is now at rest. It was travelling big with gracious designs before; it hath now delivered itself. It would rather create new heavens every moment, than not satisfy: but it hath now done it to the full; the utmost capacity of the soul is filled up; it can be no happier than it is. This is love's triumph over all the miseries, wants, and desires of a languishing soul: the appropriate, peculiar glory of divine love. If all the excellencies of the whole creation besides, were contracted into one glorious creature, it would never be capable of this boast, I have satisfied one soul. The love of God leaves none unsatisfied, but the proud despisers of it. Now is the eternal sabbath of love. Now it enters into rest, having finished all its works; it views them over now with delight, for lo! they are all good; its works of pardon, of justification and adoption; Its works of regeneration, of conversion, and sanctification; Its establishing, quickening, comforting works; they are all good,

good in themselves, and in this their end, the satisfaction and repose of blessed souls. Now divine love puts on the crown, ascends the throne, and the many myriads of glorified spirits fall down about it, and adore: all profess to owe to it the satisfying pleasures they all enjoy. Who can consider the unspeakable satisfaction of those blessed spirits, and not also reflect upon this exalted greatness of divine love!

(2.) It is again great love, if we consider wherewith they shall be satisfied. The sight and participation of the divine glory, his face, his likeness, his represented and impressed glory. There may be great love that never undertakes, nor studies to satisfy all the desires of the persons we cast our love upon, especially where nothing will satisfy but high and great matters. The love of God knows no difficulties; nor can be overset. The greater the performance or vouchsafement, the more suitable to divine love. It hath resolved to give the soul a plenary satisfaction, perfectly to content all its desires; and since nothing else can do it, but an eternal beholding of the glorious face of the divine majesty, and a transformation into his own likeness, that shall not be with-held. Yea, it hath created, refined, enlarged its capacity on purpose, that it might be satisfied with nothing less. Great love may sometimes be signified by a glance; the offered view of a willing face. Thus our Lord Jesus invites his church to discover her own love, and answer his, Let me see thy face, &c. Cant. 2. 14. Love is not more becomingly expressed or gratified, than by *mutual looks, ubi amor, ibi oculus.* How great is that love that purposely lays aside the vail, that never turns away its own, nor permits the aversion of the beholder's eye thoughout eternity. Now we see in a glass; then face to face, as if never weary of beholding on either part; but on that part the condescension lies, is the transcendent admirable love. That a generous beneficent, the other (till it be satisfied here) a craving, indigent love. And how inexpressible a condescension is this? Poor wretches! many of whom, possibly, were once so low, that a strutting grandee would have thought himself affronted by their look, and have met with threatening rebukes by their over-daring venturous eye; lo now they are permitted (to stand before princes; that is a mean thing) to feed their eyes with divine glory, to view the face of God. He sets them before his face for ever. And that eternal vision begets in them an eternal likeness; they behold and partake glory at once, that their joy may be full. They behold not a glorious God with deformed souls; that would render them a perpetual abomination and torment to themselves. Love cannot permit that heaven should be their afflic-

tion: that they should have cause to loath and be weary of themselves in that presence. It satisfies them, by clothing and filling them with glory; by making them partake of the divine likeness, as well as behold it. It is reckoned a great expression of a complying love, but to give a picture; when the parties loved only permit themselves to view in a mute representation a vicarious face. This is much more a vital image (as before) God's own living-likeness propagated in the Soul; the inchoation of it is called the divine love, the seed of God. What amazing love is this, of the great God to a worm! not to give over till he have assimilated it to his own glory; till it appear as a ray of light begotten of the Father of lights! Every one, saith the apostle, that doth righteousness is born of him; 1 John. 2. 29. and then it follows, behold, what manner of love—3. 1. to be the sons of God; to be like him, to see him as he is, &c. How great a word is that (spoken in reference to our present state)—to make us partakers of *his* holiness. Heb. 12. 10. And (as well it might) it is instanced as an effect and argument of love, (for sure chastening itself, abstracted from that end of it, doth not import love) whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,—and then by and by, in the same series and line of discourse is added,—to make us partakers of his holiness. Love always either supposes similitude, or intends it; and is sufficiently argued by it either way. And sure, the love of God cannot be more directly expressed, than in his first intending to make a poor soul like him, while he loves it with compassion; and then imprinting and perfecting that likeness, that he may love it with eternal delight. Love is here the first and the last, the beginning and end in all this business.

CHAP. XIV.

7. Inference. That since this blessedness is limited to a qualified subject "I in righteousness," the unrighteous are necessarily left excluded. 8. Inference. That righteousness is no vain thing, in as much as it hath so happy an issue, and ends so well.

7. CONSIDERING this blessedness is not common but limited to a qualified subject "I in righteousness," a person clothed in righteousness: it evidently follows, the unrighteous are necessarily excluded and shut out, can have no part nor portion in this blessedness. The same thing that the apostle tells us, without an inference; Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, &c. (1 Cor. 6. 9.) intimating that to be a most confessed known thing: know ye not? is it possible ye can be ignorant of this? The natural necessity of what hath been here inferred, hath been argued already from the consideration of the nature of this blessedness. The legal necessity of it, arising from the divine will and law, is that I mainly intend at present. By such a necessity also, they are excluded, who by God's rule (according to which the supreme judgment must be managed) shall be found unrighteous: those that come not up to the terms of the gospel-covenant; never accepted the offers, not submitted to the commands of it; and that hence consequently are unrelated to Christ, and ununited to him; no way capable of advantage by his most perfect and all-sufficient righteousness, that alone fully answers all the exactions and demands of the covenant of works: and so, who are at last found unrighteous by the old law and the new, the law both of the Creator and Redeemer too. There is the same necessity these should be excluded, as that God should be just and true. The word is gone forth of his mouth in righteousness, and cannot return. He did not dally with sinners, when he settled those constitutions, whence this necessity results. He is not a man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent." A heathen understood so much of the nature of God.

I have thought sometimes, with much wonder, of the stupid folly of unsanctified hearts; they are even confounded in their own wishes; and would have (in order to their security) they know not what. Were the question faithfully put to the very heart of such a one, what wouldst thou have done in order to thy eternal safety from divine wrath and vengeance? would not the answer be, O that God would recall those severe constitutions he hath made; and not insist so strictly on what he hath required in the gospel, in order to the salvation of sinners. But foolish wretch! dost thou know what thou sayest! wouldst thou have God repeal the gospel, that thou mayest be the more secure? in what a case art thou then? Hast thou no hope if the gospel stand in force? what hope wilt thou have if it do not? Must the hopes of all the world be ruined to establish thine? and yet leave them involved in the common ruin too? What, but the gospel gives the least hope to apostate sinners? There is now hope for thee in the gospel-promise, if thou return to God. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon. Isa. 55. 7. But take away the gospel, and where art thou? Where it possible for thee to repent, and become a new man; what settles the connexion between repentance and salvation, but the gospel-promise? Will the violated law of works accept thy repentance instead of obedience? Doth it not expressly preclude any such expectation? Doth it give any ground to look for any thing but death after sin? Thou must therefore fly to the gospel, or yield thyself lost. And know, it contains none but faithful and true sayings, that have more stability in them than the foundations of heaven and earth: therefore expect nothing to be altered for thy sake. The gospel constitution was settled long before thou wast born: thou comest too late with thy exceptions (if thou hadst any) against it. Remember therefore this is one of the unalterable determinations of this gospel, without holiness thou shalt never see God, or (which amounts to the same) thou canst not behold his face but in righteousness. There is no word in all the Bible of more certain truth than this. In this also how apt are sinners foolishly to entangle themselves! The gospel is true, and to be believed, till they meet with something that crosses them, and goes against the hair, and then they hope it is not so. But vain man! If once thou shake the truth of God, what wilt thou stay thyself upon? Is God true when he promises? and is he not as true when he threatens? If that be a true saying, "Say to the righteous, it shall be well with him,"—is not that as much to be regarded. "Woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with

him? The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Are not these of equal authority? If thou hadst any reason to hope thou mayest be happy though thou never be righteous; is there not as much reason to fear thou mightest be miserable though thou be; since the one is as much against the flat express word of God as the other? Let not thy love to sin betray thee out of all religion and thy wits together. Wherein wilt thou believe one upon the bare value of his word, that will lie to thee in any thing? Yea, and as it is the same authority that is affronted in every command, whence disobedience to one is a breach of all; so is the same veracity denied in every truth, and the disbelief of one belies all; and wilt thou believe him in any thing, thou hast proclaimed a liar in every thing? Therefore, so little hast thou gained by disbelieving the divine revelation in this thing, that thou hast brought thyself to this miserable dilemma; If the word of God be false, thou hast no foundation of any faith left thee, if it be true, it dooms thee to eternal banishment from his blessed face, while thou remainest in thy unrighteousness. It will not be thy advantage then to disbelieve this gospel-record, but to consider it, and take it to heart; it will prove never the less true at last, for that thou wilt not believe it, Shall thy unbelief make the truth of God of none effect? And if thou wouldst but reasonably consider the case, methinks thou shouldst soon be convinced. Since thou acknowledgest (as I suppose thee to do,) that there are two states of men in the other world, a state of blessedness, and a state of misery; and two sorts of men in this world, the righteous, and the unrighteous: let thy reason and conscience now judge who shall be allotted to the one state, and who to the other. Sure, if thou acknowledge a righteous Judge of all the world, thou canst not think he will turn men promiscuously into heaven or hell at random, without distinction: much less canst thou be so absurd and mad, as to think all the unrighteous shall be saved, and the righteous perish. And then what is left thee to judge but that which I am now urging upon thee, that when the righteous shall be admitted to the vision of God's blessed face, the unrighteous shall be driven forth into outer darkness.

It may be some here will be ready to say, "But to what purpose is all this, they were of the same mind before, and cannot think that any one would ever say the contrary." Nor do I think so either; but it is one thing not to believe a conclusion to be true and another to profess a contrary belief: and one thing to believe a conclusion, another to think we believe it. Men often know not their own minds. In practical matters,

it is best seen what a man's belief is by his practice: for when any profess to believe this or that practical truth, relating to their salvation, if they believe it not practically, that is, with such a belief as will command their suitable practice, it matters not what belief they are of, or whether they were of that judgment or no: yea, it will prove in the issue better for them they had been of another, when their own professed belief shall be urged against them. But let us consider a little, how in practical matters of less concernment we would estimate a man's belief. You meet a traveller upon the way, who tells you, the bridge over such an unpassable river is broken down, and that if you venture you perish; if you believe him, you return; if you hold on, he reasonably concludes you believe him not; and will therefore be apt to say to you, if you will not believe me you may make trial. Your physician tells you a disease is growing upon you, that in a short time will prove incurable and mortal, but if you presently use the means he shall prescribe, it is capable of an easy remedy: how would you yourself have your belief of your physician judged of in this case? Would you expect to be believed, if you should say, you do not at all distrust your physician's integrity and judgment, but yet you resolve not to follow his directions; unless you would have us believe too, that you are weary of your life, and would fain be rid of it? There is no riddle or mystery in this. How ridiculous would men make themselves, if in matters of common concernment they should daily practise directly contrary to their professed belief? How few would believe them serious, or in their wits? But however, call this believing, or what you will, we contend not about the name; the belief of such a thing can no further do you good, you can be nothing the better for it, further than as it engages you to take a course suitable and consequent to such a belief. To believe that there is a hell, and run into it; that unrighteousness persisted in will damn you, and yet will live in it! To what purpose is it, to make your boasts of this faith? But since you are willing to call this believing; all the foregoing reasoning is to engage you to consider what you believe. Do you believe that unrighteousness will be the death of your soul; will eternally separate you from God, and the presence of his glory? and when you have reasoned the matter with yourself, you find it to be certainly so: should not such a thing be more deeply pondered? The bare proposal of an evident truth commands present assent; but if I further bend my mind to reason out the same thing to myself, I am occasioned to take notice of the grounds, dependencies, the habitudes of it, what it rests upon, and whither it tends, and thence more discern its importance, and of what moment it is,

than I should have done, if upon first view I had assented only, and dismissed it my thoughts. And yet is it possible, you should think this to be true, and not think it a most important truth? Is it a small matter in your account, whether you shall be blessed or miserable for ever? whether you be saved or perish eternally? Or is it considered by you, according as the weight of the matter requires, that as you are found righteous or unrighteous, so will it everlastingly fare with you?

You may possibly say, you already conclude yourself righteous, therefore no further employ your thoughts about it. But methinks, you should hardly be able however to put such a thing out of your thoughts; while as yet the final determination is not given in the case. If a man have a question yet depending, concerning his life or estate; though his business be never so clear, he will hardly forget it, the trial not being yet past. And though in this matter, you have no reason to suspect error or corruption in your Judge, (through which many honest causes may miscarry in a human judicature) yet have you no reason to suspect yourself? If the Holy Spirit hath assured you, he hath not stupified you; but as you have then the less of fear, you have the more of love and joy. Therefore you will not thence mind such a concernment the less, but with the more delight; and therefore also, most probably, with the more frequency and intension. What a pleasure will it be to review evidences, and say, Lo! here are the mediums by which I make out my title to the eternal inheritance. Such and such characters give me the confidence to number myself among God's righteous ones. And do you lead that heavenly raised life? do you live in those sweet and ravishing comforts of the Holy Ghost, that may bespeak you one whom he hath sealed up to the day of redemption? If you pretend not to any such certainty, but rely upon your own judgment of your case; are you sure you are neither mistaken in the notion of the righteousness required, nor in the application of it to your own soul? Possibly, you may think yourself, because in your ordinary dealing you wrong no man (yourself being judge,) a very righteous person. But evident it is, when the Scripture uses this term as descriptive of God's own people, and to distinguish between them that shall be saved and perish, it takes it in that comprehensive sense before explained. And however, it requires at least much more of thee, under other expressions, as thou canst hardly be so ignorant but to know. And do but use thy reason here a little, and demand of thyself: is he to be accounted a righteous person, that thinks it fit to avoid wronging a man, but makes no conscience at all of wronging God? More particularly: Is it righteous, to live all thy days in a willing ignorance of the Author of thy being, ne-

ver once to enquire, Where is God my Maker? Job. 35. 10. Is it righteous to forget him days without number, not to have him from day to day in all thy thoughts? Is it righteous to estrange thyself from him, and live as without him in the world, while thou livest, movest and hast thy being in him; not to glorify him in whose hands thy breath is? to be a lover of pleasure more than God? a worshipper, in thy very soul, of the creature more than the Creator? Is it righteous to harden thy heart against his fear and love? to live under his power, and never reverence it; his goodness, and never acknowledge it? to affront his authority, to belie his truth, abuse his mercy, impose upon his patience, defy his justice; to exalt thy own interest against his; the trifling petite interest of a silly worm, against the great all-comprehending interest of the common Lord of all the world? to cross his will, to do thy own? to please thyself, to the displeasing of him? whence hadst thou thy measures of justice, if this be just?

Again, is it righteous to deny the Lord that bought thee, to neglect that great salvation which he is the author of? And whereas he came to bless thee in turning thee from thine iniquities, wilfully to remain still in an accursed servitude to sin? when he was made manifest to destroy the works of the devil, still to yield thyself a captive at his will? whereas he died that thou mightest not any longer live to thyself, but to him that died for thee, and rose again; and that he might redeem thee from thy vain conversation, and that thou art so expressly told, that such as still lead sensual lives, mind earthly things, have not their conversation in heaven, are enemies to the cross of Christ. Is it no unrighteousness, that in these respects thy whole life should be nothing else but a constant contradiction to the very design of his dying? a perpetual hostility, a very tilting at his cross? Is there no unrighteousness in thy obstinate infidelity, that wickedly denies belief to his glorious truths, acceptance of his gracious offers, subjection to his holy laws? No unrighteousness in thy obstinate, remorseless impenitency? thy heart that cannot repent? that melts not, while a crucified Jesus, amidst his agonies and dying pangs, cries to thee from the cross, O sinner, enough, thy hard heart breaks mine! yield at last, and turn to God. Is it righteous, to live as no way under law to Christ? to persist in actual rebellion against his just government, which he died, and revived, and rose again, to establish over the living and the dead? yea, and that while thou pretendest thyself a christian? In a word: Is it righteous to tread under foot the Son of God, to vilify his blood, and despise his Spirit; Is this the righteousness that thou talkest of? Are these thy qualifications for the everlasting blessedness? If thou say, thou confessest thou art in thyself, in these several

respects, altogether unrighteous: but thou hopest the righteousness of Christ will be sufficient to answer for all; no doubt Christ's righteousness is abundantly available to all the ends for which it was intended by the Father and him; but it shall never answer all the ends that a foolish, wicked heart will fondly imagine to itself.

In short, it serves to excuse thy non-performance of, and stands instead of thy perfect sinless obedience to, the law of works; but it serves not instead of thy performance of what is required of thee, as the condition of the gospel-covenant. That is, It shall never supply the room of faith, repentance, regeneration, holiness, the loving of Christ above all, and God in him; so as to render these unnecessary, or salvation possible without them. There is not one *iota*, or *tittle* in the Bible, that so much as intimates an unregenerate person, an unbeliever, an impenitent or unholy person, shall be saved by Christ's righteousness; but enough to the contrary, every one knows, that hath the least acquaintance with the Scriptures. Vain man! what, is Christ divided and divided against himself; Christ without, against Christ within? His sufferings on the cross and foregoing obedience, against his Spirit and government in the soul? Did Christ die to take away the necessity of our being christians? And must his death serve not to destroy sin out of the world, but Christianity? Who hath taught thee so wickedly to misunderstand the design of Christ's dying? And when the Scripture so plainly tells thee, that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John. 3. 16. And that he became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him; (Heb. 5. 9.) yea, and that he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know and obey him not. What should induce thee to think thou mayest be saved by him, whether thou believest and obeyest or not? No, if ever thou think to see God, and be happy in him, thou must have a righteousness in thee resembling his; the very product, the thing wrought in the work of regeneration. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him. Whereupon follows the description of the blessedness of such righteous ones, in the beginning of the next chapter,——They are sons——they shall be like, &c. So that in a word, without some sight of God here, there is no seeing him hereafter; without some likeness to him now, none hereafter. And such as are destitute of that heart-conformity to the gospel, wherein the evangelical righteousness stands, are so far from it, that we may say to them as our Saviour to the Jews, Ye have nei-

ther heard his voice, nor seen his shape, (John. 5. 37.) that is, you have never had right notion, or any the least true glimpse of him; your hearts are wholly destitute of all divine impressions whatsoever.

8. We may further infer, from this qualification of the subject of blessedness, that righteousness is no vain thing. That is not in vain, that ends so well, and hath so happy an issue at last. Scripture tells us, that the labour of the righteous tendeth to life: (Prov. 10. 16.) and that we may understand it of their labour as they are righteous, we are more plainly told, that righteousness tendeth to life; (ch. 11. 19.) and that to them that sow righteousness shall be a sure reward. (ver. 18.) that the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (Mat. 13. 43.) the righteous into eternal life. ch. 25. 46. And we here see that righteousness ends in the blessed sight of God's glorious face, in being satisfied with the divine likeness. Foolish sinners are justly upbraided that they spend their labour for that which satisfies not; (Isa. 55. 2.) take much pains to no purpose; such are all the works of sin, toilsome, fruitless; what fruit had ye of those things (namely, which ye wrought when you were free from righteousness) whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But (it follows) being now made free from sin, and become servants to God (which is paraphrased above by servants to righteousness) ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Rom. 6. 20—22. The fruit is a continual increase of holiness, a growing more and more like God; till at last everlasting life, satisfaction with his likeness, do crown and consummate all.

You have now what to answer to the atheist's profane query, What profit is it to serve God? to what purpose to lead so strict and precise a life? You may now see to what purpose it is; and whereunto godliness (which righteousness here includes) is profitable as having, besides what it entitles to here, the promise of that life which is to come. There needs no more to discover any thing not to be vain (inasmuch as nothing can be said to be so, but in reference to an end, as being good for nothing) than the eviction of these two things:—that it aims at a truly worthy and valuable end; and—that its tendency thereto is direct and certain. In the present case, both these are obvious enough at the first view. For as to the former of them: all the world will agree, without disputing the matter, that the last end of man (that is, which he ultimately propounds to himself) is his best good: and that he can design no further good to himself than satisfaction; nothing after or beyond that: and what can afford it, if the vision and participation of the divine glory do not? As to the latter: besides all that assurance

given by Scripture-constitution to the righteous man, concerning his future reward, let the consciences be consulted of the most besotted sinners, in any lucid interval, and they will give their suffrage (Balaam, that so earnestly followed the reward of unrighteousness, not excepted,) that the way of righteousness is that only likely way to happiness; and would therefore desire to die, at least the righteous man's death, and that their latter end should be like his. So is wisdom (I might call it righteousness too; the wicked man is the Scripture fool, and the righteous the wise man) justified not by her children only, but by her enemies also. And sure, it is meet that she should be more openly justified by her children, and that they learn to silence and repress those mis-giving thoughts; Surely I have washed my hands in vain, &c. Psal. 73. 13. And be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as they know their labour is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. 15. 58.

CHAP. XV.

Two other inferences, from the consideration of the season of this blessedness: The former, that inasmuch as this blessedness is not attained in this life, the present happiness of saints must in a great part consist in hope. The latter, that great is the wisdom and sagacity of the righteous man, which waves a present temporary happiness and chooses, that which is distant and future.

INasmuch as the season of this blessedness is not on this side the grave, nor expected by saints till they awake; we may further infer,

9. That their happiness in the mean time doth very much consist in hope; or that hope must needs be of very great necessity and use to them in their present state for their comfort and support. It were not otherwise possible to subsist in the absence and want of their highest good, while nothing in this lower world is, as to kind and nature, suitable to their desires, or makes any colourable overture to them of satisfaction and

happiness. Others (as the psalmist observes) have their portion in this life; that good, which as to the species and kind of it, is most grateful to them, is present, under view, within sight; and (as the apostle Rom. 8. 24.) Hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it? But those whose more refined spirits, having received the first-fruits of the Holy Spirit of God, prompt them to groan after something beyond time, and above this sublunary sphere; of them the apostle there tells us, that they are saved by hope. They (as if he should say) subsist by it; they were never able to hold out, were it not for their hope; and that a hope too, beyond this life, as is the hope of a christian; if in this life only we had hope in Christ, &c. 1 Cor. 15. 19. The hope of a christian, as such, is suitable to its productive cause, the resurrection of Christ from the dead; begotten to a lively hope by the resurrection, &c. 1 Pet. 1. 3. Thence is it the hope of a renewed, never-dying life, the hope of a blessed immortality; whereof Christ's resurrection was a certain argument and pledge.

Indeed the new creature is, *ab origine, originally,* and all along a hoping creature, both in its *primum* and its *porro esse:* It is conceived, and formed, and nursed up in hope. In its production, and in its progress towards perfection, it is manifestly influenced thereby. In the first return of the soul to God, hope being then planted as a part of the holy, gracious nature, now manifestly discovers itself, when the soul begins to act, (as turning after the reception of the divine influence, is its act) hope insinuates itself into (or induces rather) that very act. Returning is not the act of a despairing, but hoping soul. It is God apprehended as reconcileable, that attracts and wins it; while he is looked upon as an implacable enemy, the soul naturally shuns him, and comes not nigh, till drawn with those cords of a man, the bands of love. Hos. 11. 4. While it says, there is no hope, it says withal (desperately enough) I have loved strangers, and after them will I go. But if there be any hope in Israel, concerning this thing: if it can yet apprehend God willing to forgive, then let us make a covenant, &c. Ezr. 10. 2. 3. This presently draws the hovering soul into a closure and league with him. And thus is the union continued. Unsteadfastness in the covenant of God, is resolved into this not setting, (Psal. 78. 7—13.) or fixing of hope in him, or (which amounts to the same) setting of hope in God is directed as a means to steadfastness of spirit with him, and a keeping of his covenant. Revolting souls are encouraged to return to the Lord upon this consideration, that salvation is hoped for in vain from any other. (Jer. 3. 22. 23.) the case being indeed the same, in all after-

conversions as in the first. God as multiplying to pardon, and still retaining the same name, the Lord, the Lord gracious and merciful, Exod. 34. 6. (which name in all the severals that compose and make it up, is in his Christ) invites back to him the backsliding sinner, and renews his thoughts of returning. And so is he afterwards under the teachings of grace led on by hope, through the whole course of religion towards the future glory. Grace appears, teaching sinners to deny ungodliness, &c. (Tit. 2. 11. 12. 13.) and in the looking for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God, &c. So do they keep themselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Thus is the new creature formed in hope, and nourished in hope, and if its eye were upon pardon at first, it is more upon the promised glory afterwards. And yet that last end hath in a degree its attractive influence upon it, from the first formation of it; it is even then taught to design for glory. It is begotten to the lively hope, (where though hope be taken objectively, as the apposition shews of the following words, to an inheritance, yet the act is evidently connoted; for the thing hoped for, is meant under that notion, as hoped for:) and its whole following course is an aiming at glory; a seeking glory, honour, immortality, &c. Rom. 2. 7. Thus is the work of sanctification carried on; he that hath this hope purifieth himself. 1 John. 3. 3. Thus are losses sustained; The spoiling of goods taken joyfully through the expectation of the better and enduring substance. Heb. 10. 34. The most hazardous services undertaken, even an apostleship to a despised Christ,—In the hope of eternal life, with God that cannot lie hath promised. Tit. 1. 1. 2. All difficulties encountered and overcome, while the helmet is the hope of salvation. 1 Thes. 5. 3. All worldly evils are willingly endured; and all *such* good things quitted and forsaken, for Christ's sake and his elects'. And if the question be asked, (as it was once of Alexander, when so frankly distributing his treasures among his followers) what do you reserve for yourself? The resolved christian makes (with him) that short and brave reply, *HOPE*. He lives upon things future and unseen. The objects any one converses with most, and in which his life is as it were bound up, are suitable to the ruling principles of life in him. They that are after the flesh, do savour the things of the flesh; they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. Rom. 8. 5. The principle of the fleshly life is *sense*: The principle of the spiritual life is *faith*. Sense is a mean, low, narrow, incomprehensive principle, limited to a point, this center of earth, and το νυν *this now* of time; it can reach no higher than ter-

rene things, nor further than present things: so brutish is the life of him that is led by it; wholly confined to matter and time. But the righteous live by faith. Their faith governs and maintains their life. They steer not their course according to what they see, but according to what they believe: and their daily sustenance is by the same kind of things. Their faith influences not their actions only, but their comforts and enjoyments. They subsist by the things they believe, even invisible and eternal things; but it is by the intervening exercise of hope, whose object is the same. The apostle having told us from the prophet, that the just shall live by faith, (Heb. 10. 38.) presently subjoins a description of that faith they live by, namely, that it is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; (Heb. 11. 1.) it substantiates and realizes, evidences and demonstrates those glorious objects, so far above the reach and sphere of sense. It is constantly sent out to forage in the invisible regions for the maintenance of this life; and thence fetches in the provisions upon which hope feeds, to the strengthening of the heart, the renewing of life and spirits. Our inward man (saith the apostle 2. Cor. 4. 16. 18.) is renewed day by day; while we look, or take aim (which is next in the series of the discourse, for the intervening verse is manifestly parenthetical) not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. And the word σκοπουντων here rendered *look* doth plainly signify the act of hope as well as that of faith; for it doth not import a mere intuition or beholding, a taking notice or assenting only that there are such things, but a designing or scoping at them (which is the very word) with an appropriative eye; as things that notwithstanding their distance, or whatsoever imaginable difficulty, are hoped to be attained to and enjoyed, And here are evidently the distinct parts of faith and hope in this business; faith, upon the authority and credit of the divine word and promise, persuades the heart that there is such a glorious state of things reserved for saints in general, (faith can go no further for the word of promise goes no further) and so serves instead of eyes in the divine light, to view those glories; or it presents them (as so many substantial realities,) demonstrates them, submits them to view, whence *hope* reaches forth to them; contends against and triumphs over all attending difficulties, and possesses them; gives the soul an early anticipated fruition of them, for its present support and relief. So that it rejoices in the hope of the glory of God. Rom. 5. 2—12. 12. It might well therefore be said, I had fainted, if I had not believed, (Psal. 27. 13. 14.) or who can express how sad my case had been, if I had not be-

lieved? for, there is an elegant aposiopesis in the hebrew text, the words "I had fainted" being supplied in the translation. If I had not believed, what had become of me then? As though he had said, Inasmuch as faith feeds, as it were, those hopes which more immediately the Lord makes use of, for the strengthening his people's hearts, as it was intimated in the following words, compared with Psal. 31. 24. In the present case; faith ascertains the heart, of the truth of the promises, so that thus the soul states the case to itself; Though I have not walked to and fro in those upper regions, nor taken a view of the heavenly inheritance; though I have not been in the third heavens, and seen the ineffable glory; yet the gospel-revelation, which hath brought life and immortality to light, the word of the eternal God, who hath told me this is the state of things in the other world, cannot but be true; my faith may therefore be to me instead of eyes; and the divine testimony must supply the place of light; both together give, methinks, a fair prospect of those far distant, glorious objects which I have now in view. Now this awakens hope, and makes it revive, and run to embrace what faith hath discovered in the promise: In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised. Tit. 1. 2. Psal. 119. 49. It is the word of God that causes the soul to hope, (that is believed, for disbelieved, it signifies nothing with it) and that not only as it contains a narration, but a promise concerning the future estate. I may without much emotion of heart, hear from a traveller the description of a pleasant country, where I have not been; but if the Lord of that country give me, besides the account of it, an assurance of enjoying rich and ample possessions there, this presently begets a hope, the pleasure whereof would much relieve a present distressed estate; and which nothing, but that of actual possession can exceed. That it is not more so with us here, admits of no excuse. Is God less to be believed than a man? Will we deny him the privilege of being able to discover his mind, and the truth of things credible, which we ordinarily allow to any one that is not a convicted liar? Christ expects his disciples should very confidently assure themselves of the preparations made for them in another world, upon that very ground alone, that he had not told them the contrary: Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare, &c. (John 14. 1, 2.) intimating to them, they ought to have that opinion of his plainness and sincerity, as never to imagine he would have proselyted them to a religion that should undo them in this world, if there were not a sufficient recompence awaiting them in the other, but he would certainly have let them known

the worst of their case: much more might he expect, they should be confident upon his so often and expressly telling them, that so it is. If his silence might be a ground of hope, much more his word. And surely so grounded a hope cannot but be consolatory, and relieving in this sad interval, till the awaking hour.

10. Since this blessedness of the righteous is, as to the season of it, future, not expected till they awake, we may infer, that it is great wisdom and sagacity that guides the righteous man's choice; while he waves a present and temporary, and chooses this future and expected blessedness. It is true, that philosophy hath been wont to teach us, that choice or election hath no place about the end, because that is but one, and choice always implies a competition. But that very reason evinces, that in our present state and case, choice must have place about the end. That philosophy might have suited better the state of innocent Adam; when there was nothing to blind and bribe a man's judgment, or occasion it to deliberate about the supreme end, (then it might be truly said, deliberation itself was a defection,) nor to pervert and misincline his will; and so its action, in proposing its end, would be simple intention, not choice. But so hath the apostacy and sin of man blinded and befooled him, that he is at a loss about nothing more than what is the chief good. And though saint Augustine (De Civit. Dei. lib. 19.) reduce Varro's two hundred and eighteen differing sects about it to twelve, that is enough to prove (but daily experience doth it more convincingly and sadly) a real, though most unjust competition. Therefore a sinner can never be blessed without choosing his blessedness, and therein it highly concerns him to choose aright, and that a spirit of wisdom and counsel guide his choice. While man had not as yet fallen, to deliberate whether he should adhere to God or no, was a gradual declension, the very inchoation of his fall; but having fallen, necessity makes that a virtue which was a wickedness before. There is no returning to God without considering our ways. The so much altered state of the case, quite alters the nature of the things. It was a consulting to do evil before; now to do good. And hence also, choosing the Lord to be our God, Josh. 24. 15. becomes a necessary duty. Which is to make choice of this very blessedness, that consists in the knowledge, likeness, and enjoyment of him. And now, inasmuch as the blessedness is not fully attained by the longing soul, till time expire and its eternity commence; here is a great discovery of that wisdom which guides this happy choice. This is great wisdom in prospection; in taking care of the future; and at how much

the further distance one can provide, so much the greater reputation of wisdom is justly acquired to him; yea, we seem to place the sum of practical wisdom in this one thing, while we agree to call it providence, under the contracted name of prudence. The wise man makes it at least an evidence or part of wisdom, when he tells us, the prudent foreseeth, &c. Prov. 22. 3. The righteous man so far excels in this faculty, as that his eye looks through all the periods of time, and penetrates into eternity, recommends to the soul a blessedness of that same stamp and alloy, that will endure and last for ever. It will not content him to be happy for an hour, or for any space that can have an end; after which it shall be possible to him to look back and recount with himself how happy he was once: nor is he so much solicitous what his present state be, if he can but find he is upon safe terms as to his future and eternal state. As for me, saith the psalmist, (he herein sorts and severs himself from them whose portion was in this life,) I *shall* behold—I *shall* be satisfied, when I awake; *Est bene non potuit dicere dicit erit, he could not say it was well with him, but shall be,* as though he had said, Let the purblind, short-sighted sensualist embrace this present world, who can see no further: let me have my portion in the world to come; may my soul always lie open to the impression of the powers of the coming world; and in this, so use every thing as to be under the power of nothing. What are the pleasures of sin, that are but for a season; or what the sufferings of this *now*, this moment of affliction, to the glory that shall be revealed, to the exceeding and eternal glory? He considers, patient afflicted godliness will triumph at last, when riotous, raging wickedness shall lament for ever. He may for a time weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; he may be sorrowful, but his sorrow shall be turned into joy, and his joy none shall take from him. (John 16. 20, 22.) Surely here is wisdom; this is the wisdom that is from above, and tends thither. This is to be wise unto salvation. The righteous man is a judicious man; he hath in a measure that judgment (wherein the apostle prays the Philippians might abound, Phil. 1. 9, 10.) to approve things that are excellent, and accordingly to make his choice. This is a sense (little thought of by the author) wherein that sober speech of the voluptuous philosopher (Epicurus) is most certainly true, A man cannot live happily, without living wisely. No man shall ever enjoy the eternal pleasures hereafter, that in this acquits not himself wisely here, even in this choosing the better part, that shall never be taken from him. In this the plain righteous man out-vies the greatest sophists, the scribe, the disputer, the politician, the prudent mammonist, the facetious wit; who in their several kinds, all think

themselves highly to have merited to be accounted wise: and that this point of wisdom should escape their notice, and be the principal thing with him, can be resolved into nothing else but the divine good pleasure! In this contemplation our Lord Jesus Christ is said to have rejoiced in spirit, (it even put his great comprehensive soul into an extacy,) Father, I thank thee, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes; even so Father, because it pleased thee! Luke 10. 21. Here was a thing fit to be reflected on, as a piece of divine royalty; a part worthy of the Lord of heaven and earth! And what serious spirit would it not amaze, to weigh and ponder this case awhile; to see men excelling in all other kinds of knowledge, so far excelled by those they most contemn, in the highest point of wisdom; such as know how to search into the most abstruse mysteries of nature; that can unravel, or see through the most perplexed intrigues of state; that know how to save their own stake, and secure their private interest in whatsoever times; yet so little seen (often, for not many wise) in the matters that concern an eternal felicity! It puts me in mind of what I find observed by some, *dementia quoad hoc, particular madness* as it is called; when persons, in every thing else, capable of sober rational discourse, when you bring them to some one thing (that in reference to which they became distempered at first) they rave and are perfectly mad: how many that can manage a discourse with great reason and judgment about other matters, who when you come to discourse with them about the affairs of practical godliness, and which most directly tend to that future state of blessedness, they are as at their wits end, know not what to say; they savour not those things? These are things not understood, but by such to whom it is given: and surely that given wisdom is the most excellent wisdom. Sometimes God doth, as it were, so far gratify the world, as to speak their own language, and call them wise that affect to be called so, and that wisdom which they would fain have go under that name; (Moses it is said was skilled in all the wisdom of Egypt, &c. Acts 7.22.) but at other times he expressly calls those wise men fools, and their wisdom, folly and madness; or annexes some disgraceful abject for distinction sake; or applies those appellatives ironically, and in manifest derision. No doubt, but any such person as was represented in the parable, would have thought himself to have done the part of a very wise man, in entertaining such deliberation and resolves, as we find he had there with himself: how strange was that to his ears, Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul. &c. Luke. 12.20. Their wisdom is sometimes said to be foolish; or else called the wisdom of the flesh, or fleshly

wisdom; said to be earthly, sensual, devilish; they are said to be wise to do evil; while to do good they have no understanding; they are brought sometimes as it were upon the stage with their wisdom, to be the matter of divine triumph; where is the wise? and that which they account foolishness is made to confound their wisdom. And indeed do they deserve to be thought wise, that are so busily intent upon momentary trifles, and trifle with eternal concernments? that prefer vanishing shadows to the everlasting glory? that follow lying vanities, and forsake their own mercies? Yea, will they not cease to be wise in their own eyes also, when they see the issue, and reap the fruits of their foolish choice? when they find the happiness they preferred before this eternal one is quite over; and nothing remains to them of it, but an afflictive remembrance? that the torment they were told would follow, is but now beginning, and without end? when they hear from the mouth of their impartial Judge; Remember, you in your life-time had your good things, and my faithful servants their evil; now they must be comforted, and you tormented? when they are told, you have received (Luke 6. 24, 25.) the consolation; you were full, ye did laugh, now you must pine, and mourn, and weep? Will they not then be as ready to be-fool themselves, and say as they, (Wisd. 5. 3.) See those righteous ones are they whom we sometimes had in derision, and for a proverb of reproach; we fools counted their life madness, and that their end was without honour; but now, how are they numbered among the sons of God, and their lot is among the saints? They that were too wise before, to mind so mean a thing as religion (the world through wisdom knew not God; 1 Cor. 1. 21. strange wisdom!) that could so wisely baffle conscience, and put fallacies upon their own souls; that had so ingenious shifts to elude conviction, and divert any serious thought from fastening upon their spirits; that were wont so slily to jeer holiness, seemed as they meant to laugh religion out of countenance; * they will now know, that a circumspect walking, a faithful redeeming of time, and improving it in order to eternity, was to do, not as fools, but as wise; and begin to think of themselves, now at last, as all wise and sober men thought of them before.

* Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom. Prov. 15.

CHAP. XVI.

The other general head of the improvement or use of the doctrine propounded from the text, containing *Secondly*, Certain rules or prescriptions of duty connatural thereto. 1. That we settle in our minds the true notion of this blessedness. 2. That we compare the temper of our own spirits with it, and labour thence to discern whether we may lay claim to it or no.

THUS far we have an account of the truths to be considered and weighed that have dependance on the doctrine of the text. We proceed,

Secondly. To the duties to be practised and done in reference thereto, which I shall lay down in the ensuing rules or prescriptions,

1. That we admit and settle the distinct notion of this blessedness in our minds and judgments: that we fix in our own souls, apprehensions agreeable to the account this scripture hath given us of it. This is a counsel leading and introductive to the rest; and which if it obtain with us, will have a general influence upon the whole course of that practice which the doctrine already opened calls for. As our apprehensions of this blessedness are more distinct and clear, it may be expected more powerfully to command our hearts and lives. Hence it is, in great part, the spirits and conversations of christians have so little savour and appearance of heaven in them. We rest in some general and confused notion of it, in which there is little either of efficacy or pleasure; we descend not into a particular inquiry and consideration what it is. Our thoughts of it are gloomy and obscure; and hence it is our spirit is naturally listless and indifferent towards it, and rather contents itself to sit still in a region all lightsome round about, and among objects it hath some present acquaintance with, than venture itself forth as into a new world which it knows but little of. And hence our lives are low and carnal; they look not as though we were seeking the heavenly country; and indeed who can be in good earnest in seeking after an unknown state? This is owing to our negligence

and infidelity. The blessed God hath not been shy and reserved; hath not hidden or concealed from us the glory of the other world; nor locked up heaven to us; nor left us to the uncertain guesses of our own imagination, the wild fictions of an unguided fancy; which would have created us a poetical heaven only, and have mocked us with false elysiums: but though much be yet within the vail, he hath been liberal in his discoveries to us. Life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel. The future blessedness (though some refined heathens have had near guesses at it) is certainly apprehensible by the measure only of God's revelation of it: for who can determine, with certainty, of the effects of divine good pleasure, (it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom?) Who can tell before hand what so free and boundless goodness will do, further than as he himself discovers it? The discovery is as free as the donation. The things that eye hath not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man, God hath revealed to us by his Spirit: (1 Cor. 2. 9.) and it follows, ver. 12, We have received the Spirit of God, that we might know the things freely given us of God. The Spirit is both the principle of the external revelation, as having inspired the Scriptures which foreshew this glory, and of the internal revelation also, to enlighten blind minds that would otherwise (ανωπαξ) never be able to discover things at so great a distance, see afar off: therefore called the spirit of wisdom and revelation, by which the eyes of the understanding are enlightened to know the hope of that calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance *among* the saints as the εν there is most fitly to be rendered. Eph. 1. 17.

But this internal discovery is made by the mediation and interveniency of the external: therefore having that before our eyes we are to apply our minds to the study and consideration of it; and in that way to expect the free illumination of the Holy Spirit. In the mean time we must charge our ignorance, and the darkness of our cloudy thoughts, touching these things, upon our carelessness, that we do not attend; or our incredulity, that we will not believe what God hath revealed concerning them: it is therefore a dutiful attention, and reverential faith that must settle and fix the notion of this blessedness. If we will not regard nor give credit to what God hath discovered concerning it, we may sit still in a torpid, disconsolate darkness, which we ourselves are the authors of, or (which is no less pernicious) compass ourselves with sparks beaten out of our own forge, walk in the light of our own fire, cheat our souls with the fond dream of an imagined heaven, no where to be found, till we at length lie down in sorrow. How perverse are the imaginations of men

in this (as in reference to the way, so) in respect of the end also; for as they take upon them to fancy another way to happiness quite besides and against the plain word of God; so do they imagine to themselves another kind of happiness, such as shall gratify only their sensual desires; a mahometan, indeed a fool's paradise; or at best it is but a negative heaven; they many times entertain in their thoughts (of which their sense too is the only measure) a state wherein nothing shall offend or incommode the flesh; in which they shall not hunger, nor thirst, nor feel want: and when they have thus stated the matter in their own thoughts, we cannot beat them out of it, but that they desire to go to heaven (namely, the heaven of their own making;) when, did they conceive it truly and fully, they would find their hearts to abhor from it, even as hell itself. Therefore here we should exercise an authority over ourselves, and awaken conscience to its proper work and business; and demand of it, is it not reasonable these divine discoveries should take place with me? hath not God spoken plainly enough? why should my heart any longer hang in doubt with me, or look wishly towatds future glory, as if it were an uncouth thing? or is it reasonable to confront my own imaginations to his discoveries? Charge conscience with the duty it owes to God in such a case; and let his revelations be received with the reverence and resignation which they challenge; and in them study and contemplate the blessedness of awakened souls, till you have agreed with yourself fully how to conceive it. Run over every part of it in your thoughts; view the several divine excellencies which you are hereafter to see and imitate: and think what every thing will contribute to the satisfaction and contentment of your spirits. This is a matter of unspeakable consequence. Therefore, to be as clear as is possible, you may digest what is recommended to you in these more particular directions.

(1.) Resolve with yourselves, to make the divine revelation of this blessedness the prime measure and reason of all your apprehensions concerning it. Fix that purpose in your own hearts, so to order all your conceptions about it, that when you demand of yourselves, what do I conceive of the future blessedness? and why do I conceive so? the divine revelation may answer both the questions. I apprehend what God hath revealed, and because he hath so revealed. The Lord of heaven sure best understands it, and can best help us to the understanding of it. If it be said of the origin of this world, πίστει νοοῦμεν, it may much more be said of the state of the other, we understand it by faith: (Heb. 11. 3.) that must inform and perfect our intellectuals in this matter.

(2.) Therefore reject and sever from the notion of this bles-

sedness, whatsoever is alien to the account Scripture gives us of it, Think not that sensual pleasure, that a liberty of sinning, that an exemption from the divine dominion, distance and estrangedness from God (which by nature you wickedly affect) can have any ingrediency into, or consistency with, this state of blessedness.

(3.) Gather up into it whatsoever you can find by the scripture-discovery to appertain or belong thereto. Let your notion of it be to your uttermost, not only true, but comprehensive and full, and as particular and positive, as God's revelation will warrant: especially remember it is a spiritual blessedness, that consists in the refining and perfecting of your spirits by the vision and likeness of the holy God, and the satisfying of them thereby for ever.

(4.) Get the notion of this blessedness deeply imprinted in your minds; so as to abide with you, that you may not be always at a loss, and change your apprehensions every time you come to think of it. Let a once well-formed idea, a clear, full state of it be preserved entire, and be (as a lively image) always before your eyes, which you may readily view upon all occasions.

2. That having well fixed the notion of this blessedness in your minds, you seriously reflect upon yourself, and compare the temper of your spirit with it; that you may find out how it is affected thereto; and thence judge in what likelihood you are of enjoying it. The general aversion of men's spirits to this so necessary work of self-reflection, is one of the most deplorable symptoms of lapsed degenerated humanity. The wickedness that hath over-spread the nature of man; and a secret consciousness and misgiving hath made men afraid of themselves, and studiously to decline all acquaintance with their own souls; to shun themselves as ghosts and spectres; they cannot endure to appear to themselves. You can hardly impose a severer task upon a wicked man, than to go retire an hour or two, and commune with himself; he knows not how to face his own thoughts: his own soul is a devil to him, as indeed it will be in hell, the most frightful, tormenting devil. Yet, what power is there in man, more excellent, more appropriate to reasonable nature, than that of reflecting, of turning his thoughts upon himself? Sense must here confess itself outdone. The eye that sees other objects cannot see itself: but the mind, a rational sun, cannot only project its beams, but revert them; make its thoughts turn inward. It can see its own face, contemplate itself. And how useful an endowment is this to the nature of man? If he err, he might perpetuate his error, and wander infinitely, if he had not this self-reflecting power; and if he do well, never know

without it the comfort of a rational self-approbation: which comfort paganish morality hath valued so highly, as to account it did associate a man with the inhabitants of heaven, and make him lead his life as among the gods (as their pagan language is;) though the name of the reflecting power *conscience*, they were less acquainted with; the thing itself they reckoned as a kind of indwelling deity, as may be seen at large in those discourses of Maximus Tyrius, and Apuleius, both upon the same subject, concerning the god of Socrates. And another giving this precept. Familiarize thyself with the gods, adds, Συζην θεοις Συζη δε θεοις ο συνεχως δεικνυς εαυτοις την εαυτου ψυχην, αρεσκομενην μεν τοις απονεμομενοις, ποιουσανδε οσα βελτιαι ο δαιμων, ον εκαστω της ψυχης νους και λογος. Marc. Anton. lib. 5. "*and this shalt thou do if thou bear thy mind becomingly towards them, being well pleased with the things they give, and doing the things that may please thy dæmon or genius, whom* (saith he *the most high God* (which they mean by Jupiter) hath put into every *man, as a derivation or extraction from himself* (αποσπασμα) *to be his president and guide; namely, every one's own mind and reason.* And this mind or reason in that notion of it, as we approve ourselves to it, and study to please it, is the same thing we intend by the name of conscience. And how high account they had of this work of self-reflection, may appear in that they entitled the oracle to that document, γνωσθισεαυτον *know thyself, E cœlo descendit*, came down from heaven esteeming it above human discovery, and that it could have no lower than a divine original; and therefore consecrating and writing it up in golden characters in their delphic temple (as Pliny in forms* us) for a heavenly inspired dictate.

Among christians that enjoy the benefit of the gospel-revelation, in which men may behold themselves, as one may his natural face in a glass, how highly should this self-knowledge be prized, and how fully attained? The gospel discovers, at the same time, the ugly deformities of a man's soul, and the means of attaining a true spiritual comeliness; yea, it is itself the instrument of impressing the divine image and glory upon men's spirits: which when it is in any measure done, they become sociable and conversable with themselves, and when it is but in doing it so convincingly, and with so piercing energy, lays open the very thoughts of men's hearts, (Heb. 4. 12.) so thoroughly rips up and dissects the soul, so directly turns, and strictly holds a man's eye intent upon himself; so powerfully urges and obliges the

* Hist. Mundi, The wisdom and significancy of which dedication Plato also (in Alcibiad. 1.) takes notice of.

sinner to mind and study his own soul; that where it hath effected any thing, been any way operative upon men's spirits, they are certainly supposed to be in a good measure acquainted with themselves, whatever others are. Therefore the apostle bids the Corinthians, if they desire a proof of the power and truth of his ministry, to consult themselves, examine yourselves, and presently subjoins, know ye not your own selves? (2 Cor. 13. 5.) intimating, it was an insupposable thing they should be ignorant. What! christians and not know yourselves? Can you have been under the gospel so long, and be strangers to yourselves? none can think it. Sure it is a most reproachful thing, a thing full of ignominy and scandal, that a man should name himself a christian, and yet be under gross ignorance, touching the temper and bent of his soul. It signifies, that such a one understands little of the design and tendency of the very religion he pretends to be of, that he was a christian by mere chance that he took up and continues his profession in a dream. Christianity aims at nothing, it gets a man nothing, if it do not procure him a better spirit, it is an empty insignificant thing, it hath no design in it at all, if it do not design this. It pretends to nothing else. It doth not offer men secular advantages, emoluments, honours; it hath no such aim to make men in that sense rich, or great, or honourable, but to make them holy, and fit them for God. He therefore loses all his labour and reward, and shews himfelf a vain trifler in the matters of religion, that makes not this the scope and mark of his christian profession and practice; and herein he can do nothing without a constant self-inspection. As it therefore highly concerns, it well becomes a christian under the gospel, to be in a continual observation and study of himself, that he may know to what purpose he is a christian; and take notice, what (or whether any) good impressions be yet made upon his spirit; whether he can gain any thing by his religion. And if a man enter upon an inquiry into himself, what more important question can he put than this, In what posture am I as to my last and chief end? how is my spirit framed towards it? This is the intendment and business of the gospel, to fit souls for blessedssen: and therefore, if I would inquire, what am I the better for the gospel? this is the sense and meaning of that very question, Is my soul wrought by it to any better disposition for blessedness? Upon which the resolution of this depends, Am I ever likely to enjoy it, yea or no? That which may make any heart not deplorably stupid, shake and tremble, that such a thing should be drawn into question; but the case with the most requires it, and it must be so. It is that therefore I would fain

here awaken souls to, and assist them in; that is, propound something (in pursuance of the present direction) which might both awaken them to move this great question, and help them in discussing it. Both which will be done in shewing the importance of this latter ultimate question in itself, and then the subserviency of the former subordinate one, towards the deciding it. These two things therefore I shall a little stay upon:—to shew and urge the requisiteness of debating with ourselves, the likelihood or hopefulness of our enjoying this blessedness, and—to discover that the present habitude, or disposedness of our spirits to it, is a very proper apt medium, whereby to judge thereof.

(1.) As to the former of these. Methinks our business should do itself: and that the very mention of such a blessedness, should naturally prompt souls to bethink themselves,. Doth it belong to me? have I any thing to do with it? Methinks every one that hears of it should be beforehand with me, and prevent me here. Where is that stupid soul that reckons it an indifferent thing to attain this blessed state, or fall short of it? When thou hearest this is the common expectation of saints, to behold the face of God, and be satisfied with his likeness, when they awake; canst thou forbear to say with thyself, and what shall become of me when I awake? what kind of awaking shall I have? shall I awake amidst the beams of glory, or flames of wrath? If thou canst be persuaded to think this no matter of indifferency, then stir up thy drowsy soul to a serious inquiry, how it is likely to fare with thee for ever; and to that purpose put thy conscience to it, to give a free, sincere answer to these few queries.

[1.] Canst thou say thou art already certain of thy eternal blessedness? Art thou so sure, that thou needest not inquire? I know not who thou art that now readest these lines, and therefore cannot judge of thy confidence whether it be right or wrong,; only that thou mayst not answer too hastily, consider a little, that certainty of salvation is no common thing; (Phil. 2. 12.) not among (I speak you see of subjective certainty) the heirs of salvation themselves. How many of God's holy ones, that cannot say they are certain; yea, how few that can say they are? That exhortation to a church of saints, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, (they of whom he expresseth such confidence, chap.1.6. over whom he so glories, chap.4.1.) implies this to be no common thing; so doth Christ's advice to his disciples, strive to enter in at the strait gate; and St. Peter to the scattered Jews (that he saith had obtained like precious faith, &c.) give diligence to make your calling and election sure; with many more passages of like import. Yea, how full is the Scripture of the complaints of *such* crying out of broken

bones, of festering wounds, of distraction by divine terrors. Now what shall we say in this case, when so eminent saints have left us records of the distresses and agonies of their spirits, under the apprehended displeasure of God? May it not occasion us to suspend awhile, and consider? have we much more reason to be confident than they? and do we know none that lead stricter and more holy lives than we, that are yet in the dark, and at a loss in judging their spiritual states? I will not say, that we must therefore think ourselves bound to doubt, because another possibly better than we doth so. Unknown accidents may much vary the cases. But who would not think, that reason and modesty had quite forsaken the world, to hear (where the odds is so vastly great) the vain boasts of the loose generality, compared with the humble, solicitous doubts of many serious, knowing christians? to see such trembling about their soul-concernments, who have walked with God, and served him long in prayers and tears? when multitudes that have nothing whereon to bottom a confidence but pride and ignorance, shall pretend themselves certain! If drawing breath awhile, thou wilt suspect thou have reason not to be peremptory in thy confidence; thou wilt sure think thyself concerned to inquire further. Urge thy soul then with this question again and again, Art thou yet certain, yea or no?

[2.] Is it a comfortable state to be uncertain, or to have before thee apparent grounds of a rational and just doubt? For causeless doubts may sooner vanish, when their causelessness is once discovered; and so they are less likely to keep a person that is capable of understanding his own case, under a stated discomfort. But I suppose thee, in order to the answering the foregoing query, to have in some measure considered the case; and that with a preponderating apprehension of danger in it, thou returnest it uncertain. Uncertain, man! And what, wilt thou remain uncertain? wilt thou sit still so, till thou perish? shall thy life hang in doubt, and thy soul be in jeopardy every hour, till the everlasting flames resolve the doubt, and put the matter out of question with thee? What course canst thou apply thyself to, but to inquire and search further into thy own state, to avoid the torture of thy own fears, the pangs and dreadful expectation of a palpitating, misgiving heart? It is true, that inquisitive diligent doubtfulness hath hope and comfort in it, but doubtfulness joined with a resolution of casting off all further care, is utterly desperate and disconsolate. What remains to thee in that case, but a fearful looking for of fiery indignation? how canst thou pass an hour in peace, while thou apprehendest it unlikely, thou shalt see the face, and be satisfied with the image of God? do not thy own thoughts represent to thee, the amazing

sights, the horrid images which shall for ever entertain and possess thy soul? Art thou not daily haunted with divine horrors? when thou sayest at night, thy bed shall refresh thee, art thou not terrified with dreams and affrighted with visions? Dost thou not say in the morning, would to God it were evening; and in the evening say, would to God it were morning? And while thou knowest not what else to do, meditate only changes instead of remedies? or if thou find no such trouble invading thy mind, let me further ask:

[3.] Is it reasonable to be secure in such a state of uncertainty? Debate this matter a little while with thyself. Is it thy reason, or thy sloth that makes thee sit still and forbear to look into thy spiritual affairs? Is it any rational consideration, or not rather the mere indisposition of a soul, afraid to know its own state, that suspends thee from inquiring? What hast thou to say, that looks like a reason? Is it that it will disturb thy thoughts, interrupt thy pleasures, fill thee with anxious cares and fears, which thou art as loth to admit, as burning coals into thy bosom? Is it that thou canst not endure to look upon so dreadful an object, as the appearing danger, or possibility of thy being miserable to eternity? And art thou therefore resolved to shut thine eyes, and cry peace, peace? This is to avoid a present inconvenience, by an eternal mischief, (a gross overstraining the paradox!) for avoiding the present fear of hell to run into it; as if because a man cannot bear the thoughts of dying, he should presently cut his own throat. Vain man! canst thou not bear the thoughts of eternal misery; how wilt thou bear the thing? And how long-lived dost thou think that peace shall be, that thou purchasest upon so dear and hard terms? canst thou promise thyself an hour? mayst thou not lose thy purchase and price together the next moment? canst thou defer thy misery by forgetting it; or will thy judgment linger, and thy damnation slumber, while thou securely lingerest and slumberest? canst thou wink hell into nothing; and put it out of being, by putting it out of thy thoughts? Alas man! open thy eyes when thou wilt, thou shalt find thou hast not bettered thy case by having them fast closed. The bitterness of death is not yet past. The horrid image is still before thee. This is not a fancied evil, which a man may dream himself into, and *eadem opera, with as little difficulty*, dream himself out of it again: no, thy case is miserable and dangerous when thou composest thyself to sleep; if thou awakest thou wilt find it still the same; only thou didst not apprehend it before, for then thou wouldst not have slept: as the drunkard that kills a man, and after falls asleep in his drunken fit, he awakes and understands his wretched case. Would his sleeping

on, till the officer's arrest had awaked him, have mended the matter with him? But thou wilt possibly say, Is it not better here to have a little quiet now, than to be miserable by sad thoughts here, and miserable by actual suffering hereafter too? Is not one death enough? why should one kill himself so often over; and hasten misery, as if it came on too slowly? Better, man! A hard choice. Supposing thou art to be eternally miserable (if thou understandest that word eternity,) the good or evil of this little inch of time, will signify so little with thee, as hardly to weigh any thing in the scale of a rational judgment. But what, art thou now dreaming while thou thus reasonest? Dost thou yet no better understand thy case? art thou not under the gospel? Is it not the day of thy hope, and of the Lord's grace and patience towards thee? It was said, that sleeping would not better thy case; but it was not said, that awaking would not; but all that is here said, is designed to the awakening of thee, that thou mayst know thy case, and endeavour a redress. Dost thou think any man in his sober wits would take all this pains thus to reason with thee, if that were the acknowledged and agreed state of thy case, that it were already taken for granted thou must perish? We might as well go preach to devils, and carry down the gospel into hell. But dost thou think the holy merciful God sent his Son and his ministers to mock men; and to treat with them about their eternal concernments, when there is no hope? Were that thy case, thou hadst as good a pretence as the devil had, to complain of being tormented before thy time. But if thou be not wilfully perverse, in mistaking the matter we are reasoning about, thou mayst understand, thy reason is here appealed to in this; whether having so fair hopes before thee, as the gospel gives, of this blessedness we are discoursing of, it be reasonable from the apprehension of a mere possibility of miscarrying, (which can only be through thy wilful security and neglect,) to give up thyself to a supine negligence, and indulge that security which is so sure to ruin thee, and exchange a possible hoped heaven for a certain hell; or whether rather it be not reasonable to stir up thy soul to consider in what posture thou art, towards the attainment of this blessedness, that thou mayst accordingly steer thy course in order to it? If an accusation, or a disease do threaten thy life; or a suspected flaw thy title to thy estate, wouldst thou not think it reasonable to inquire into thy case? And is it not much more desirable, in a matter of this consequence, to be at some certainty? and prudent to endeavour it, if it may possibly be attained? Whence let me further ask:

[4.] Canst thou pretend it to be impossible? Hath God left

thee under a necessitated ignorance, in this matter? or denied thee sufficient means of knowing how it is with thee in respect of thy spiritual estate? Though he have not given thee a list, or told thee the number or names of his sanctified ones, yet hath he not sufficiently described the persons, and given the characters by which they may be known? And hath he not furnished thee with a self-reflecting power, by which thou art enabled to look into thyself, and discern whether thou be of them or no? Doth he not offer and afford to serious, diligent souls, the assisting light of his blessed Spirit to guide and succeed the inquiry? And if thou find it difficult to come to a speedy, clear issue, to make a present certain judgment of thy case; ought not that to engage thee to a patient continued diligence, rather than in a rash despairing madness to desist and cast off all? inasmuch as the difficulty, though great, is not insuperable; and the necessity and advantage incomparably greater. And (though divers other things do confessedly fall in) the principal difficulty lies in thy aversation and unwillingness. Thou art not put to traverse the creation, to climb heaven, or dig through the earth; but thy work lies nigh thee, in thy own heart and spirit; and what is so nigh, or should be so familiar to thee, as thyself? it is but casting thy eye upon thy own soul, to discern which way it is inclined and bent, thou art urged to. Which is that we propounded next to discover: namely,

(2.) That we are to judge of the hopefulness of our enjoying this blessedness, by the present habitude or disposedness of our spirits thereto. For what is that righteousness which qualifies for it, but the impress of the gospel upon the minds and hearts of men? The gospel-revelation is the only rule and measure of that righteousness: it must therefore consist in conformity thereto. And look to the frame and design of the gospel-revelation, and what doth so directly correspond to it, as that very habitude and disposedness of spirit for this blessedness whereof we speak? Nothing so answers the gospel, as a propension of heart towards God gratified in part now, and increasing till it find a full satisfaction; a desire of knowing him and of being like him. It is the whole design of the gospel, which reveals his glory in the face of Jesus Christ, to work and form the spirits of men to this. They therefore whose spirits are thus wrought and framed, are righteous by the gospel-measure, and by that righteousness are evidently entitled and fitted for this blessedness. Yea, that righteousness hath in it (or rather) is the elements, the first principles, the seed of this blessedness. There can therefore be no surer rule or mark whereby to judge our states, whether we have to do with this blessedness, may expect

it yea or no, than this. How stand we affected towards it; in what disposition are our hearts thereto? Those fruits of righteousness, by which the soul is qualified to appear without offence in the day of Christ, the several graces of the sanctifying Spirit, are nothing else but so many holy principles, all disposing the soul towards this blessedness, and the way to it; mortification, self-denial, and godly sorrow, take it off from other objects, the world, self and sin; repentance (that part of it which respects God) turns the course of its motion towards God the end; faith directs it through Christ the way; love makes it move freely; desire, earnestly; joy, pleasantly; hope, confidently; humility, evenly; fear, circumspectly; patience, constantly and perseveringly. All conspire to give the soul a right disposition towards this blessedness. The result of them all is heavenliness, a heavenly temper of spirit. For they all (one way or other,) as so many lines and rays have respect to a blessedness in God (which is heaven) as the point at which they aim; and the *cuspis*, the *point* in which they meet, in order to the touching of that objective point, is heavenliness. This is the ultimate and immediate disposition of heart for this blessedness; the *result* the *terminus productus* of the whole work of righteousness in the soul; by which it is said to be as it were,, *nata ad glorium, begotten to the eternal inheritance.* Concerning this therefore chiefly institute thy inquiry. Demand of thyself, Is my soul yet made heavenly, bent upon eternal blessedness, or no? And here thou mayst easily apprehend, of how great concernment it is, to have the right notion of heaven, or future blessedness, as was urged under the foregoing rule. For if thou take for it another thing, thou missest thy mark, and art quite beside thy business: but if thou retain a right and scriptural notion of it, the rule thou art to judge by is sure, they shall have heaven whose hearts are intent upon it, and framed to it. Scripture is every where pregnant and full of this.

The apostle plainly intimates, this will be the rule of God's final judgment. Certainly it cannot be unsafe for us to judge ourselves by the same rule. He tells us, when God shall judge every one according to his works (the great business of the judgment day,) eternal life shall be the portion of them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, sought glory, and honour, and immortality: (Rom. 2. 6, 7.) which are but other expressions of the same thing. What can be more plain? They shall have eternal life and glory that seek it; whose hearts are towards it. Again, speaking of true christians, διαφερικως, (that is in a way of contradistinction from Pseudo-christians, such as he saith were enemies of the cross,) he gives us, among other,

this brand of these latter, that they did mind earthly things, and tells us, their end should be destruction; but gives us this opposite character of the other, our conversation is in heaven; (Phil. 3. 18, — 20.) our trade and business, our daily negotiations, as well as the privileges of our citizenship lie there, as his expression imports, and thence intimates the opposite end of such, whence we look for a Saviour; not destruction, but salvation. And in the same context of Scripture, where they that are risen with Christ, and who shall appear with him in glory, are required to set their mind on things above, and not on things on the earth: (Col. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.) that we may understand this, not to be their duty only, but their character, we are immediately told, they who follow not this counsel, and mortify not their earthly members (those lusts that dispose men towards the earth, and to grovel in the dust, as the graces of the Spirit dispose them heavenward, and to converse with glory) are the children of disobedience, upon whom the wrath of God cometh. The faith, the just live by, is the substance of things hoped for, &c. Heb. 11. 1, 13, 16. Such believers are confessed, avowed strangers on earth; and seekers of the better, the heavenly country, whence it is said, God will not be ashamed to be called their God; plainly implying, that as for low, terrene spirits, that love to creep on the earth, and embrace dunghills, God will be ashamed of them; he will for ever disdain a relation to them, *while* and *as* such. And if we will be determined by the express word of our great Redeemer, to whom we owe all the hopes of this blessedness; when he had been advising not to lay up treasure on earth, but in heaven, he presently adds, Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also. Mat. 6. 19, 20, 21. If thy treasure, thy great interest, thy precious and most valuable good be above, that will attract thy heart, it will certainly be disposed thitherward.

Yet here it must carefully be considered, that inasmuch as this blessedness is thy end, that is, thy supreme good (as the notion of treasure also imports,) thy heart must be set upon it above any other enjoyment; else all is to no purpose. It is not a faint, slight, over-mastered inclination that will serve the turn, but (as all the forementioned scriptures import) such as will bespeak it a man's business to seek heaven, his main work; and give ground to say of him, his heart is there. If two lovers solicit the same person, and speaking of them in comparisons she say, this hath my heart; is it tolerable to understand her, as meaning him she loves less? so absurd would it be to understand scriptures, that speak of such an intention of heart heaven-ward, as if the faintest desire, or coldest wish, or most lazy

inconstant endeavour were all they meant. No, it is a steady, prevalent, victorious direction of heart towards the future glory, in comparison whereof, thou despisest all things else (all temporal, terrene things,) that must be the *evidential* ground of thy hope to enjoy it. And therefore in this, deal faithfully with thy own soul, and demand of it; Dost thou esteem this blessedness above all things else? Do the thoughts of it continually return upon thee, and thy mind and heart, as it were naturally run out to it? Are thy chiefest solicitudes and cares taken about it, lest thou shouldst fall short and suffer a disappointment? Dost thou savour it with pleasure; hath it a sweet and grateful relish to thy soul? Dost thou bend all thy powers to pursue and press on towards it? Urge thyself to give answer truly to such inquiries; and to consider them seriously, that thou mayst do so. Such whose spirits are either most highly raised and lifted up to heaven, or most deeply depressed and sunk into the earth, may make the clearest judgment of themselves. With them that are of a middle temper, the trial will be more difficult, yet not fruitless, if it be managed with serious diligence, though no certain conclusion or judgment be made thereupon. For the true design and use of all such inquiries and reflections upon ourselves (which let it be duly considered) is, not to bring us into a state of cessation from further endeavours; as if we had nothing more to do (suppose we judge the best of our state that can be thought,) but to keep us in a wakeful temper of spirit; that we may not forget ourselves in the great business we have yet before us, but go on with renewed vigour through the whole course of renewed endeavours, wherein we are to be still conversant, till we have attained our utmost mark and end. Therefore is this present inquiry directed, as introductive to the further duty, that in the following rules is yet to be recommended.

CHAP. XVII.

Rule 3. Directing such as upon inquiry find, or see cause to suspect, a total aversation in themselves to this blessedness, to be speedy and restless in their endeavours to have the temper of their spirits altered and suitable to it. Doubts and objections concerning the use of such endeavours, in such a case, answered. Some considerations to enforce this direction propounded and pressed.

3. THAT if upon such reflection we find or suspect ourselves wholly disaffected and unsuitable to this blessedness, we apply ourselves to speedy, incessant endeavours to get the temper of our spirits changed and fitted thereto. The state of the case speaks itself, that there is no sitting still here. This is no condition, *soul* to be rested in; unless thou art provided to encounter the terrors of eternal darkness, and endure the torture of everlasting burnings. Yet am I not unapprehensive how great a difficulty a carnal heart will make of it to bestir itself in order to any redress of so deplorable a case. And how real a difficulty it is, to say any thing that will be thought regardable to such a one. Our sad experience tells us, that our most efficacious words are commonly wont to be entertained as neglected puffs of wind; our most convictive reasonings and persuasive exhortations lost (yea, and though they are managed too in the name of the great God)as upon the deaf and dead: which is too often apt to tempt into that resolution, of "speaking no more in that name." And were it not that the dread of that great majesty restrains us, how hard were it to forbear such expostulations; "Lord, why are we commonly sent upon so vain an errand? why are we required to speak to them that will not hear, and expose thy sacred truths and counsels to the contempt of sinful worms; to labour day by day in vain, and spend our strength for nought?" Yea, we cannot forbear to complain, "None so labour in vain as we: of all men none so generally improsperous and unsuccessful. Others are wont to see the fruit of their labours, in proportion to the expence of strength in them: but our strength is labour and sorrow (for the most part) without the return of a joyful fruit. The hus-

bandman plows in hope, and sows in hope, and is commonly partaker of his hope: we are sent to plow and sow among rocks and thorns, and in the high-way; how seldom fall we upon good ground? Where have we any increase? Yea, Lord, how often are men the harder for all our labours with them, the deader for all endeavours to quicken them? Our breath kills them whom thou sendest us to speak life to; and we often become to them a deadly savour. Sometime, when we think somewhat is done to purpose, our labour all returns, and we are to begin again; and when the duties we persuade to, come directly to cross men's interests and carnal inclinations, they revolt and start back, as if we were urging them upon flames, or the sword's point; and their own souls and the eternal glory are regarded as a thing of nought: then heaven and hell become with them fancies and dreams; and all that we have said to them false and fabulous. We are to the most as men that mock, in our most serious warnings and counsels; and the word of the Lord is a reproach. We sometimes fill our mouths with arguments, and our hearts with hope, and think, sure they will now yield; but they esteem our strongest reasonings (as Leviathan doth iron and brass) but as straw and rotten wood; and laugh at divine threatenings as he doth at the shaking of the spear. Yea, and when we have convinced them, yet we have done nothing; though we have got their judgments and consciences on our side and their own, their lusts only reluctate and carry all. They will now have their way though they perish. We see them perishing under our very eye, and we cry to them (in thy name, O Lord) to return and live, but they regard us not. For these things, sometimes we weep in secret, and our eyes trickle down with tears; yea, we cry to thee, O Lord, and thou hearest us not; thy hand seems shortened, that it cannot save; it puts not on strength as in the days of old: it hath snatched souls by thousands, as firebrands out of the fire; but now thou hidest and drawest it back. Who hath believed our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Meanwhile even the devil's instruments prosper more than we: and he that makes it his business to tempt and entice down souls to hell, succeeds more than we that would allure them to heaven."

But we must speak, whether men will hear or forbear; though it concerns us to do it with fear and trembling. Oh, how solemn a business is it to treat with souls! and how much to be dreaded, left they miscarry through our imprudence or neglect! I write with solicitude what shall become of these lines; with what effect they will be read (if they fall into such hands) by them whom they most concern: yea, and with some doubt, whether it were best to write on or forbear. Sometimes one would incline to think it a merciful

omission, lest we add to the account and torment of many at last; but sense of duty towards all, and hope of doing good to some must oversway. Considering therefore the state of such souls I am now dealing with, I apprehend there may be obstructions to the entertainment of the counsel here recommended, of two sorts; partly in their minds, partly in their hearts; something of appearing reason, but more of real perverse will. That which I shall do in pursuance of it, will fall under two answerable heads:—A reply to certain doubts and objections, wherein to meet with the former: and—the proposal of some considerations, wherein to contend against the latter.

(1.) It appears, men are grown ingeniously wicked, and have learned how to dispute themselves into hell; and to neglect what concerns their eternal blessedness with some colour and pretence of reason. It will therefore be worth the while to discuss a little their more specious pretences, and consider, their more obvious (supposable) scruples, which will be found to concern, either the possibility, lawfulness, advantage or necessity of the endeavours we persuade to.

[1.] Is it a possible undertaking you put us upon; or, is there any thing we can do in order to the change of our own hearts? We find ourselves altogether undesirous of those things wherein you state blessedness, and they are without savour to us. If therefore the notion you give us of blessedness be right, all the work necessary to qualify us for it is yet to be done; we yet remain wholly destitute of any principle of life, that may dispose us to such relishes and enjoyments. If the new creature (as you say) consist in a suitable temper of spirit unto such a state as this, it is as yet wholly unformed in us: And is there any thing to be done by a dead man in order to life? Can a child contribute any thing to its first formation? or a creature to its coming into being? In answer to this, consider:

If you were serious in what you say, me thinks you should have little mind to play the sophisters, and put fallacies upon yourselves, in the matter that concerns the life of your soul. And what else are you now doing? For sure, otherwise one would think it were no such difficulty to understand the difference between the *esse simpliciter*, *the mere being* of any thing, and *the esse tale*, its *being such or such;* by the addition of somewhat afterward to that being. Though nothing could contribute to its own being simply; yet sure when it is in being, it may contribute to the bettering or perfecting of itself, (even as the unreasonable creatures themselves do:) and if it be a creature naturally capable of acting with design, it may act designedly in order to its becoming so or so qualified, or the attaining of somewhat yet wanting to its perfection, You cannot

be thought so ignorant, but that you know the new creature is only an additional to your former being: and though it be true, that it can do no more to its own production than the unconceived child (as nothing can act before it is) doth it therefore follow, that your reasonable soul, in which it is to be formed, cannot use God's prescribed means in order to that blessed change? You cannot act holily as a saint; but therefore can you not act rationally as a man! I appeal to your reason and conscience in some particulars. Is it impossible to you to attend upon the dispensation of that gospel, which is God's power unto salvation, the seal by which he impresses his image, the glass through which his glory shines to the changing of souls into the same likeness? Are you not as able to go to church as the tavern; and to sit in the assembly of saints as of mockers? Is it impossible to you, to consult the written word of God, and thence learn what you must be, and do, in order to blessedness? Will not your eyes serve you to read the Bible as well as a gazette or play-book? Is it impossible to inquire of your minister, or an understanding christian neighbour concerning the way and terms of blessedness! Cannot your tongue pronounce these words, what shall I do to be saved, as well as those, pray what do you think of the weather; or what news is there going? Yet further: Is it impossible to apply your thoughts to what you meet with suitable to your case, in your attendance upon preaching, reading, or discourse? Have all such words a barbarous sound in your ear? Can you not consider what sense is carried under them; what they import and signify? Can you not bethink yourself, Do the doctrines of God and Christ and the life to come, signify something or nothing? or do they signify any thing worth the considering, or that it is fit for me to take notice of?

And yet to proceed a little further with you: I pray you once more demand of yourselves, and put your consciences closely to it, whether, when they have told you (as no doubt they will,) that such things deserve your consideration, it be impossible to you, to use your considering power thus, and employ it even about these things? Do but make this easy trial, and then say, whether it be impossible. See if you cannot select one hour on purpose, wherein to sit down by yourselves alone, with this resolution; Well, I will now spend this hour in considering my eternal concernments. When you have obtained so much of yourself; set your thoughts on work, (you will find them voluble and unfixed, very apt to revolt and fly off from things you have no mind to, but) use your authority with yourself, tell your soul (or let it tell itself) these things concern thy life. At least, taking this prepared matter along

with thee (that thou mayst not have this pretence, thou knowest not what to think of,) try if thou canst not think of these things, now actually suggested and offered to thy thoughts: as namely, Consider, that thou hast a reasonable, immortal soul, which as it is liable to eternal misery, so it is capable of eternal blessedness: that this blessedness thou dost understand to consist only in the vision of the blessed God, in being made like to him, and in the satisfaction that is thence to result and accrue to thee. Consider (what thy very objection supposeth,) that thou findest the temper of thy spirit to be altogether indisposed and averse to such a blessedness. Is it not so? is not this thy very case? feel now again thy heart: try, is it not at least coldly affected towards this blessed state?

Is it not then obvious to thee to consider, that the temper of thy spirit must be changed, or thou art undone? that inasmuch as thy blessedness lies in God, this change must lie in the alteration of thy dispositions, and the posture of thy spirit towards him. Further, Canst thou not consider the power and fixedness of thy aversation from God; and with how mighty a weight thy heart is carried and held down from him? Try, lift at thy heart, see if it will be raised God-ward and heaven-ward? Dost thou not find, it is as if thou wert lifting at a mountain, that it lies as a dead weight and stirs not? Ponder thy case in this respect. And then, Is it not to be considered, that thy time is passing away apace?, that if thou let thyself alone, it is likely to be as bad with thee to-morrow as this day, and as bad next day as to-morrow? And if thy time expire and thou be snatched away in this state, what will become of thee? And dost thou not therefore see a necessity of considering whatever may be most moving, and most likely to incline thy heart God-ward, of pleading it more loudly and importunately with thyself? And canst thou not consider and reason the matter thus? "O my soul, what is the reason that thou so drawest back and hangest off from thy God? that thou art so unwilling to be blessed in him? that thou shouldst venture to run thyself upon eternal perdition rather? What cause hath he ever given thee to disaffect him? What is the ground of thy so mighty prejudice? Hath he ever done thee hurt? Dost thou think he will not accept a returning soul? That is to give the lie, to his gospel; and it becomes not a perishing wretch so to provoke him in whom is all its hope. Is the eternal glory an undesirable thing? or the everlasting burnings tolerable? Canst thou find a way of being for ever blessed without God; or whether he will or no? or is there a sufficient present pleasure in thy sinful distance from God, to outweigh heaven and hell? Darest thou

venture upon a resolution of giving God and Christ their last refusal; or say, thou wilt never hearken to, or have to do with them more, or darest thou venture to do what thou darest not resolve? and act the wickedness thou canst not think of? scorn eternal majesty and love? spurn and trample a bleeding Saviour?" Commune thus awhile with thyself; but if yet thou find thy heart relent nothing, thou canst yet further consider, that it lies not in thy power to turn thy own heart, (or else how comest thou thus to object?) And hence, canst thou avoid considering this is a distressed case? that thou art in great straits; liable to perish (yea, sure to do so, if thou continue in that ill temper of spirit,) and wholly unable to help thyself? Surely thou canst not but see this to be a most distressed case.

I put it now to thy conscience, whether being thus led on, thou canst not go thus far? See whether upon trial thy conscience give thee leave to say, I am not able thus to do or think: and be not here so foolish, as to separate the action of the first cause and the second, in judging thy ability. Thou mayst say no, I cannot think a good thought without God; true, so I know thou canst not move thy finger without God; but my meaning in this appeal to thy conscience is, whether upon trial thou findest not an assistance sufficient to carry thee thus far? Possibly thou wilt say, yea, but what am I the better? I am only brought to see myself in a distressed, perishing condition, and can get no further. I answer, it is well thou art got so far, if thou indeed see thyself perishing, and thy drowsy soul awake into any sense of the sadness of thy case. But I intend not thus to leave thee here; therefore let me furthermore demand of thee: What course wouldst thou take in any other distress, wherein thou knowest not what to do to help thyself? would not such an exigency, when thou findest thyself pinched and urged on every side, and every way is shut up to thee, that thou art beset with calamities, and canst no way turn thyself to avoid them; would not such an exigency force thee down on thy knees, and set thee a-crying to the God of mercy for relief and help? Would not nature itself prompt to this? Is it not natural to lift up hands and eyes to heaven when we know not what to do?* Therefore having thus far reasoned with thee about thy considering power; let me demand of thee, if thou canst not yet go somewhat further than considering? that is, in short: Is it impossible to thee to obey this dictate of nature? I mean, represent the deplorable case of thy soul before him

* Audio vulgus cum ad cœlum manus tendunt nihil aliud quam Deum dicunt, vulgi iste naturalis est sermo; where the vulgar lift up their hands to heaven, I seem to hear them addressing God himself, this is their natural language.

that made it; and crave his merciful relief? Do not dispute the matter; thou canst not but see this is a possible and a rational course, as thy case is. Should not a people seek unto their God? Fall down therefore low before him; prostrate thyself at the foot-stool of his mercy-seat. Tell him, thou understandest him to be the Father of spirits, and the Father of mercies; that thou hast heard of his great mercy and pity towards the spirits of men in their forlorn, lapsed state: what a blessedness he hath designed for them; what means he hath designed to bring them to it. Tell him, thou only needest a temper of spirit suitable to this blessedness he invites thee to; that thou canst not master and change thy sensual, earthly heart; thou knowest he easily can; thou art come to implore his help, that his blessed and Holy Spirit may descend and breathe upon thy stupid, dead soul; and may sweetly incline and move it towards him; that it may eternally rest in him; and that thou mayst not perish, after so much done in order to thy blessedness, only for want of a heart to entertain it. Tell him, thou comest upon his gracious encouragement, having heard he is as ready to give his Spirit to them that ask him, as parents, bread to their craving children rather than a stone: that it is for life thou beggest: that it is not so easy to thee, to think of perishing for ever: that thou canst not desist and give up all thy hopes: that thou shalt be in hell shortly, if he hear and help thee not. Lastly, If thus thou obtain any communication of that holy, blessed Spirit, and thou find it gently moving thy dead heart, let me once more demand of thee: Is it impossible to forbear this or that external act of sin at this time, when thou art tempted to it? sure thou canst not say, it is impossible. What necessitates thee to it? And then certainly thou mayst as well ordinarily withhold thyself from running into such customary sensualities, as tend to grieve the Spirit, debauch conscience, stupify thy soul, and hide God from thee. And if thou canst do all this, do not fool thy slothful soul with as idle a conceit, that thou hast nothing to do, but to sit still, expecting till thou drop into hell.

(2.) But have I not reason to fear, I shall but add sin to sin in all this? and so increase the burden of guilt upon my own soul; and by endeavouring to better my case, make it far worse. Two things I consider, that suggest to me this fear,—the manner and end, of the duties you put me upon, as they will be done by me in the case wherein I apprehend myself, yet to lie.—The manner: (as to the positive action you advise to,) I have heard, the best actions of an unregenerate person are sins, through the sinfulness of his manner of doing them; though as to the matter of the thing done, they be enjoined and good: and though it be true, that the regenerate cannot perform a sinless duty neither; yet

their persons and works being covered over with the righteousness of Christ, are looked upon as having no sin in them, which I apprehend to be none of my case.—And as to the end. You put me upon these things in order to the attaining of blessedness; and to do such things with intuition to a reward, is to be (as may be doubted) unwarrantable, mercenary, and servile.

[1.] As to this former reason of your doubt; methinks the proposal of it answers it. Forasmuch as you acknowledge the matter of these actions to be good and duty (and plain it is, they are moral duties, of common perpetual concernment to all persons and times,) dare you decline or dispute against your duty? Sure, if we compare the evil of what is so substantially in itself, and what is so circumstantially, only by the adherence of some undue *modus*, or *manner*; it cannot be hard to determine which is the greater and more dreadful evil. As to the present case; shouldst thou, when the great God sends abroad his proclamation of pardon and peace, refuse to attend it: to consider the contents of it, and thy own case in reference thereto, and thereupon to sue to him for the life of thy own soul? Dost thou not plainly see thy refusal must needs be more provoking than thy defective performance? This, speaks disability, but that, rebellion and contempt.* Besides, dost thou not see, that thy objection lies as much against every other action of thy life? The wise man tells us, (Prov. 21. 4.) the plowing of the wicked is sin, (if that be literally to be understood;) and what wouldst thou therefore sit still and do nothing? Then how soon would that idleness draw on gross wickedness? And would not that be a dreadful confutation of thyself, if thou who didst pretend a scruple, that thou mightst not pray, read, hear, meditate, shalt not scruple to play the glutton, the drunkard, the wanton, and indulge thyself in all riot and excess? Yea, if thou do not break out into such exorbitancies, would any one think him serious that should say, it were against his conscience to be working out his salvation, and striving to enter in at the strait gate; seeking first the kingdom of God, &c. Would not this sound strangely? And especially, that in the mean time it should never be against his conscience, to trifle away his time, and live in perpetual neglects of God, in persevering atheism, infidelity, hardness of heart, never regreted or striven against:

*Therefore as to that form of expression—that such acts of unregenerate men are sins,—that is a catachrestical piece of rhetoric, which being so understood, is harmless; but to use it in propriety of speech, and thence to go to make men believe, that it is a sin to do their duty, is void both of truth and sense, and full of danger unto the souls of men.

as if these were more innocent? And what thou sayst of the different case of the regenerate, is impertinent; for as to this matter, the case is not different, they that take themselves to be such, must not think that by their supposed interest in the righteousness of Christ, their real sins cease to be such, they only become pardoned sins; and shall they therefore sin more boldly than other men, because they are surer of pardon?

[2.] As to the other ground of this doubt, there can only be a fear of sinning, upon this account, to them that make more sins and duties than God hath made. The doubt supposes religion inconsistent with humanity: and that God were about to rase out of the nature of man, one of the most radical and fundamental laws written there,—a desire of blessedness:—and supposes it against the express scope and tenour of his whole gospel revelation. For what doth that design, but to bring men to blessedness? And how is it a means to compass that design, but as it tends to engage men's spirits to design it too? unless we would imagine they should go to heaven blindfold, or be rolled thither as stones that know not whither they are moved; in which case the gospel, that reveals the eternal glory, and the way to it, were a useless thing. If so express words had not been in the Bible, as that Moses had respect to the recompence of reward; yea, that our Lord Jesus himself, for the joy set before him endured the cross, &c. this had been a little more colourable, or more modest. And what, do not all men, in all the ordinary actions of their lives, act allowably enough, with intuition to much lower ends? even those particular ends which the works of their several callings tend to, else they should act as brutes in every thing they do. And would such a one scruple, if he were pining for want of bread, to beg or labour for it for this end, to be relieved? It is the mistaking of the notion of heaven that hath also an ingrediency into this doubt, if it be really a doubt. What! is it a low thing to be filled with the divine fulness? to have his glory replenishing our souls? to be perfectly freed from sin? in every thing conformed unto his holy nature and will? That our minding our interest in this, or any affairs, should be the principal thing with us, is not to be thought: our supreme end must be the same with his, who made all things for himself, of whom, through whom, and to whom all things are, that he alone might have the glory. But subordinates need not quarrel. A lower end doth not exclude the higher, but serves it: and is, as to it a means. God is our end as he is to be glorified and enjoyed by us: our glorifying him is but the agnition of his glory; which we do most in beholding and partaking it; which is therefore in direct subordination thereto.

(3.) But it may further be doubted, What if it be acknow-

ledged, that these are both things possible and lawful; yet to what purpose will it be to attempt any thing in this kind? O what assurance have I of success! Is there any word of promise for the encouragement of one in my case? Or is God under any obligation to reward the endeavours of nature with special grace? Wherefore, when I have done all I can, he may withhold his influence, and then I am but where I was, and may perish notwithstanding. And suppose thou perish notwithstanding? Do but yet consult a little with thy own thoughts: which is more tolerable and easy to thee to perish, as not attaining what thy fainter strugglings could not reach; or for the most direct, wilful rebellion, doing wickedly as thou couldst? Or who shall have, thinkest thou, the more fearful condemnation? He that shall truly say when his master comes to judgment, "I never had indeed, Lord, a heart so fully changed and turned to thee, as should denote me to be the subject of thy saving, pardoning mercy; but thou knowest (who knowest all things) I longed (and with some earnestness) did endeavour it. Thou hast been privy to my secret desires and moans, to the weak strivings of a listless distempered spirit, not pleased with itself, aiming at a better temper towards thee. I neglected not thy prescribed means; only that grace which I could not challenge, thou wast pleased not to give: thou didst require what I must confess myself to have owed thee; thou didst withhold only what thou owedst me not; therefore must I yield myself a convicted, guilty wretch, and have nothing to say why thy sentence should not pass." Or he that shall as truly hear from the mouth of his Judge, "Sinner, thou wast often fore-warned of this approaching day, and called upon to provide for it; thou hadst precept upon precept, and line upon line. The counsels of life and peace were with frequent importunity pressed upon thee, but thou rejectedst all with proud contempt, didst despise with the same profane scorn the offers, commands, and threats of him that made thee; hardenest thy heart to the most obstinate rebellion against his known laws; didst all the wickedness to which thy heart prompted thee, without restraint; declinedst every thing of duty which his authority, and the exigency of thy own case did oblige thee to; didst avoid as much as thou couldst to hear or know any thing of my will; couldst not find one serious, considering hour in a whole life-time, to bethink thyself, what was likely to become of thee when thy place on earth should know thee no more. Thou mightst know, thou wast at my mercy, thy breath in my hand, and that I could easily have cut thee off any moment of that large space of time, my patience allowed thee in the world; yet thou never thoughtest it worth the while to sue to me for thy life. Destruction from

the Lord was never a terror to thee. Thou wouldst never be brought upon thy knees; I had none of thy addresses; never didst thou sigh out a serious request for mercy; thy soul was not worth so much in thy account. Thy blood, wretch, be upon thy guilty head: Depart accursed into everlasting flames, &c."

Come now, use thy reason awhile, employ a few sober thoughts about this matter; remember, thou wilt have a long eternity wherein to recognize the passages of thy life, and the state of thy case in the last judgment. Were it supposable, that one who had done as the former, should be left finally destitute of divine grace and perish: yet in which of these cases wouldst thou choose to be found at last? But why yet shouldst thou imagine so sad an issue, as that after thine utmost endeavours, grace should be withheld, and leave thee to perish; because God hath not bound himself by promise to thee? What promise have the ravens to be heard when they cry? But thou art a sinner: true, otherwise thou wert not without promise; the promises of the first covenant would at least belong to thee. Yet experience tells the world, his un-promised mercies freely flow every-where; The whole earth is full of his goodness; yea, but his special grace is conveyed by promise only, and that only through Christ; and how can it be communicated *through* him to any but those that are *in* him? What then, is the first in-being in Christ no special grace? or is there any being in him before the first: that should be the ground of that gracious communication? Things are plain enough, if we make them not intricate, or entangle ourselves by foolish subtilties. God promises sinners indefinitely, pardon and eternal life, for the sake of Christ, on condition that they believe on him. He gives of his good pleasure that grace whereby he draws any to Christ, without promise directly made to them, whether absolute or conditional; though he give it for the sake of Christ also. His discovery of his purpose to give such grace to some, indefinitely, amounts not to a promise claimable by any; for if it be said to be an absolute promise to particular persons, who are they? whose duty is it to believe it made to him? If conditional, what are the conditions upon which the first grace is certainly promised? who can be able to assign them? But poor soul! thou needest not stay to puzzle thyself about this matter. God binds himself to do what he promises; but hath he any where bound himself to do no more? Did he promise thee thy being; or that thou shouldst live to this day? did he promise thee the bread that sustains thee, the daily comforts of thy life? Yea, (what is nearer the present purpose,) did he promise thee a station under the gospel? or that thou shouldst ever hear the name of Christ? If ever his Spirit have in any de-

gree moved upon thy heart, inclined thee at all seriously to consider thy eternal concernments, did he before-hand make thee any promise of that? A promise would give thee a full certainty of the issue, if it were absolute, out of hand; if conditional, as soon as thou findest the condition performed. But what! canst thou act upon no lower rate than a foregoing certainty, a pre-assurance of the event? My friend, consider a little, (what thou canst not but know already) that it is hope (built with those that are rational, upon rational probabilities, with many, oftentimes upon none at all) is the great engine that moves the world, that keeps all sorts of men in action. Doth the husbandman foreknow when he plows and sows, that the crop will answer his cost and pains? Doth the merchant foreknow, when he embarks his goods, he shall have a safe and gainful return? Dost thou foreknow, when thou eatest, it shall refresh thee? when thou takest physic, that it shall recover thy health, and save thy life? Yea further, can the covetous man pretend a promise, that his unjust practices shall enrich him? the malicious, that he shall prosper in his design of revenge? the ambitious, that he shall be great and honourable? the voluptuous, that his pleasure shall be always unmixed with gall and wormwood? Can any say, they ever had a promise to ascertain them that profaneness and sensuality would bring them to heaven? that an ungodly, dissolute life would end in blessedness? Here the Lord knows men can be confident and active enough without a promise, and against many an express threatening. Wilt thou not upon the hope thou hast before thee, do as much for thy soul, for eternal blessedness, as men do for uncertain riches, short pleasures, an airy, soon blasted name? yea, as much as men desperately do to damn themselves, and purchase their own swift destruction? Or canst thou pretend, though thou hast no pre-assuring promise, thou hast no hope? Is it nothing to have heard so much of God's gracious nature? Is it suitable to the reports, and discoveries he hath made of himself, to let a poor wretch perish at his feet, that lies prostrate there expecting his mercy? Didst thou ever hear he was so little a lover of souls? Do his giving his Son, his earnest, unwearied strivings with sinners, his long patience, the clear beams of gospel light, the amiable appearances of his grace, give ground for no better, no kinder thoughts of him? yea, hath he not expressly stiled himself the God hearing prayers, taken a name on purpose to encourage all flesh to come to him. Psal. 65. 2. Wilt thou dare then to adopt those profane words, What profit is it to pray to him? (Job. 21. 15.) and say, it is better to sit still, resolving to perish, than address to him, or seek his favour, because he hath not by promise assured thee of the

issue, and that, if he suspend his grace, all thou dost will be in vain? How wouldst thou judge of the like resolution, if the husbandman should say, When I have spent my pains and cost in breaking up and preparing the earth, and casting in my seed; if the sun shine not, and the rain fall not in season, if the influences of heaven be suspended, if God withhold his blessing, or if an invading enemy anticipate my harvest, all I do and expend is to no purpose; and God hath not ascertained me of the contrary, by express promise, it is as good therefore sit still? Censure and answer him and thyself both together.

(4.) But thou wilt yet, it may be, say that though all this may be possibly true, yet thou canst not all this while be convinced of any need so earnestly to busy thyself about this affair. For God is wont to surprise souls by preventing acts of grace, to be found of them that sought him not, to break in by an irresistible power, which they least thought of. And to go about to anticipate his grace, were to detract from the freeness, and so from the glory of it. But art thou not in all this afraid of charging God foolishly? When the merciful God, in compassion to the souls of men, hath given his gospel, constituted and settled a standing office to be perpetuated through all ages for the publication of it; invited the world therein to a treaty with him, touching the concernments of their eternal peace required so strictly their attendance to, and most serious consideration of his proposals and offers; encouraged, and commanded their addresses to him, set up a throne of grace on purpose, wilt thou dare to say, All this is needless? When God speaks to thee, is it needless for thee to hear him, or regard what he saith? or when he commands thee to pour forth thy soul to him, wilt thou say, It is a needless thing? Dost thou not plainly see, that the peculiar, appropriate aptitude of the things pressed upon thee, speaks them *necessitas medii, necessary, as means* to their designed end; whence they are fitly called means of grace? Is not the word of God the immortal seed? Are not souls begotten by that word to be the first fruits of his creatures?* Is it not the type, the mould, or print by which divine impressions are put upon the soul: the instrument by which he sanctifies. Are not the exceeding great and precious promises, the *vehicula*, the *conveyancers* of the divine nature? 2 Pet. 1. 4. And what can be the means to mollify and melt the obdurate heart of a sinner, to assuage its enmity, to overcome it into the love of God, to transform it into his image, but the gospel discovery of God's own gracious and holy nature? And can it operate to this purpose without being heard, or read, or understood, and considered, and taken

* 1 Pet. 1. 23. Jam. 1. 18. Rom 6. 17. John 17. 17.

to heart? Do but compare this means God works by, with the subject to be wrought upon, and the effect to be wrought, and nothing can be conceived more adequate and fitly corresponding. But inasmuch as there hath been an enmity between God and sinners, and that therefore the whole entire means of reconciliation must be a treaty; and that a treaty cannot be managed or conceived without mutual interlocution, therefore must the sinner have a way of expressing its own sense to God, as well as he speaks his mind to it; which shews the necessity of prayer too: and therefore, because the peace begins on his part, (though the war began on ours,) he calls upon sinners to open themselves to him; Come now, let us reason together: Isa. 1.18. He invites,addresses; Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is nigh, &c.chap. 55. 6. And doth not the natural relation itself between the Creator and a creature require this, besides the exigency of our present case? Every creature is a supplicant; its necessary dependance is a natural prayer. The eyes of all things look up, &c. It is the proper glory of a Deity to be depended on and addressed to. Should not a people seek unto their God? Isa. 8. 19. It is an appeal to reason; is it not a congruous thing?

Further, Dost thou not know, thy Maker's will made known infers upon thee a *necessitas præcepti, necessity of obeying;* unless thou think the breach between God and thee is better to be healed by rebellion; and that the only way to expiate wickedness, were to continue and multiply it. Is it a needless thing to comply with the will of him that gave thee breath and being? And whose power is so absolute over thee, as to all thy concernments, both of time and eternity? Again, while thou pretendest these things are needless, come now, speak out freely; what are the more necessary affairs wherein thou art so deeply engaged, that thou canst not suffer a diversion? What! Is the service and gratification of thy flesh and sense so important a business, that thou canst be at no leisure for that more needless work of saving thy soul? Where is thy reason and modesty? Dost thou mind none other, from day to day, but necessary affairs? Dost thou use, when thou art tempted to vain dalliances, empty discourses, intemperate indulgence to thy appetite, so to answer the temptation, Is it not necessary? Or art thou so destitute of all conscience and shame, to think it unnecessary to work out thy salvation, to strive to enter in at the strait gate that leads to life? but most indispensably necessary to be very critically curious about what thou shalt eat and drink, and put on; and how to spend thy time with greatest ease and pleasure to thy flesh, that it may not have the least cause to complain it is neglected? Thy pretence, that God is wont to be found of them

that sought him not, (Isa. 65. 1.) to the purpose thou intendest it, is a most ignorant or malicious abuse of scripture. The prophet is, in the text, foretelling the calling of the Gentiles, who, while they remained such, did not (it is true) inquire after God; but then he expressly tells us, (personating God,) I am sought of them that asked not for me, (that is, after the gospel came among them,) and then it is added, I am found (upon this seeking, plainly) of them that sought me not, (that is, who once in their former darkness, before I revealed myself in the gospel dispensation to them, sought me not:) as though he had said, I am now sought of a people that lately sought me not, nor asked after me, and I am found of them. But what is this to thy case; whom God hath been, in the gospel, earnestly inviting to seek after him, and thou all this while refusest to comply with the invitation?

And suppose thou hear of some rare instances of persons, suddenly snatched by the hand of grace out of the midst of their wickedness, as fire-brands out of the fire, Is it therefore the safest course to go on in a manifest rebellion against God, till possibly he may do so by thee also? How many thousands may have dropped into hell since thou heardest of such an instance? as a worthy person speaks to that purpose.* If thou hast heard of one Elijah fed by ravens, and of some thousands by our Saviour's miracles, canst thou thence plead a repeal of that law to the world, They that will not labour shall not eat? Or is it a safer or wiser course to wait till food drop into thy mouth from heaven, than to use a prudent care for the maintenance of thy life? If thou say, thou hearest but of few that are wrought upon in this way, of their own foregoing expectation and endeavour; remember, (and let the thought of it startle thee,) that there are but few that are saved. And therefore are so few wrought upon in this way, because so few will be persuaded to it. But canst thou say (though God hath not bound himself to the mere natural endeavours of his creature neither,) that ever any took this course, and persisted with faithful diligence, but they succeeded in it? What thou talkest of the freeness of God's grace, looks like a hypocritical pretence. Is there no way to honour his grace, but by affronting his authority? but to sin, that grace may abound? sure grace will be better pleased by obedience, than by such sacrifice. For a miserable, perishing wretch to use God's means to help itself, doth that look like merit? Is the beggar afraid thou shouldst interpret his coming to thy door and seeking thy alms, to signify, as if he thought he had deserved them? I hope thou wilt acknowledge thyself less than

* Mr. Baxter.

the least of all God's mercies, and that thou canst not deserve from him a morsel of bread; mayst thou not therefore in thy necessity labour for thy living, lest thou shouldst intrench upon the freeness of divine bounty? With as much wisdom and reason mightest thou decline the use of other means to preserve thy life, (which thou must owe to free mercy,) to eat when thou art hungry, or physic when thou art sick, lest thou shouldst intimate thou have merited the strength and health sought thereby. What can I think of any rational pretence that can more plausibly insisted on, than these that have been thus briefly discussed? And it must needs be difficult to bring any appearance of reason for the patronage of so ill a cause, as the careless giving up of a man's soul to perish eternally, that is visibly capable of eternal blessedness. And certainly were we once apprehensive of the case, the attempt of disputing a man into such a resolution, would appear much more ridiculous, than if one should gravely urge arguments to all the neighbourhood, to persuade them to burn their houses, to put out their eyes, to kill their children, and to cut their own throats. And sure, let all imaginable pretences be debated to the uttermost, and it will appear, that nothing withholds men from putting forth all their might in the endeavour of getting a spirit suitable to this blessedness, but an obstinately perverse and sluggish heart, despoiled and naked of all shew of reason and excuse. And though that be a hard task to reason against mere will, yet that being the way to make men willing, and the latter part of the work proposed in pursuance of this direction, I shall recommend only such considerations as the text itself will suggest, for the stirring up and persuading of slothful, reluctant hearts, choosing those as the most proper limits, and not being willing to be infinite herein, as amidst so great a variety of considerations to that purpose, one might.

That in general which I shall propose, shall be only the misery of the unrighteous; whereof we may take a view in the opposite blessedness here described. The contradictories whereto will afford a negative, the contraries a positive description of this misery. So that each consideration will be double; which I shall now rather glance at than insist upon.

[1.] Consider then, if thou be found at last unqualified for this blessedness, how wilt thou bear it to be banished eternally from the blessed face of God? There will be those that shall behold that face in righteousness; so shalt not thou: The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, with a "Never more see my face." Again, What amazing visions wilt thou have! What ghastly, frightful objects to converse with, amidst those horrors of eternal darkness; when the devil and his angels shall be thy

everlasting associates! What direful images shall those accursed, enraged spirits, and thy own fruitful parturient imagination for ever entertain thee with, and present to thy view!

[2.] Is it a small thing with thee, to be destitute of all those inherent excellencies which the perfected image of God, whereof thou wast capable, comprehends? View them over in that (too defective) account some of the former pages gave thee of them. Thou art none of those bright stars, those sons of the morning, those blessed, glorified spirits: thou mightest have been. But consider, What art thou? What shalt thou for ever be? What image or likeness shalt thou bear? Alas, poor wretch, thou art now a fiend! conformed to thy hellish partners: thou bearest their accursed likeness. Death is now finished in thee; and as thou sowest to the flesh, thou reapest corruption. Thou art become a loathsome carcase; the worms that never die, abound in thy putrified, filthy soul. Thou hast a hell in thee. Thy venomous lusts are now grown mature, are in their full grown state. If a world of iniquity, a fulness of deadly poison, tempered by hell-fire, is here sometimes to be found in a little member, what will there then be in all thy parts and powers!

[3.] Consider, how blessed a satisfaction dost thou lose? how pleasant and delightful a rest, arising both from the sight of so much glory, and so peaceful a temper and constitution of spirit? Here thou mightest have enjoyed an eternal undisturbed rest. But for rest and satisfaction, thou hast vexation and endless torment, both by what thou beholdest, and what thou feelest within thee. Thy dreadful visions shall not let thee rest: but the chiefest matter of thy disquiet and torment is in the very temper and constitution of thy soul. Thy horrid lusts are fuller of poisonous energy, and are destitute of their wonted objects, whence they turn all their power and fury upon thy miserable self. Thy enraged passions would fly in the face of God, but they spend themselves in tormenting the soul that bred them. Thy curses and blasphemies, the envenomed darts pointed at heaven, are reverberated and driven back into thy own heart. And therefore,

[4.] Consider, What awaking hast thou? Thou awakest not into the mild and cheerful light of that blessed day, wherein the saints of the most high hold their solemn, joyful triumph. But thou awakest into the great and terrible day of the Lord (dost thou desire it, for what end is it to thee?) a day of dardness, and not light; a gloomy and stormy day. The day of thy birth is not a more hateful, than this is a dreadful day. Thou awakest and art beset with terrors, presently apprehended and dragged before thy glorious, severe Judge, and thence into eternal

torments. O happy thou, mightest thou never awake, might the grave conceal, and its more silent darkness cover thee for ever. But since thou must awake then, how much more happy wert thou, if thou wouldst suffer thyself to be awakened now! What, to lose and endure so much, because thou wilt not now a little bestir thyself, and look about thee? Sure thy conscience tells thee, thou art urged but to what is possible; and lawful, and hopeful, and necessary; methinks, if thou be a man, and not a stone, if thou hast a reasonable soul about thee, thou shouldst presently fall to work, and rather spend thy days in serious thoughts, and prayers, and tears, than run the hazard of losing so transcendent a glory, and of suffering misery, which as now thou art little able to conceive, thou wilt then be less able to endure.

CHAP. XVIII.

Rule 4. Directing to the endeavour of a gradual improvement in such a disposedness of spirit (as shall be found in any measure already attained) towards this blessedness, That it is blessedness begun which disposes to the consummate state of it. That we are therefore to endeavour the daily increase of our present knowledge of God, conformity to him, and the satisfiedness of our spirits therein.

4. THAT when we find ourselves in any disposition towards this blessedness, we endeavour a gradual improvement therein, to get the habitual temper of our spirits made daily more suitable to it. We must still remember we have not yet attained, and must therefore continue pressing forward to this mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3. 14. Βραβειον. That prize (not price, as we commonly mis-read it in our bibles) of which the apostle here speaks, is (as may be seen by looking back to verse 8, 9, &c.) the same with the blessedness in the text. Such a knowledge of Christ, as should infer at last his participation with him in his state of glory; or of the resurrection of the dead. This is the ultimate

term, the scope or end of that high calling of God in Christ; so it is also stated else-where, Who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus. 1 Pet. 5. 10. Now we should therefore frequently recount how far short we are of this glory, and stir up our souls to more vigorous endeavours in order to it. Our suitableness to this blessedness stands in our having the elements and first principles of it in us; it is glory only that fits for glory; some previous sights and impressions of it, and a pleasant complacential relish thereof, that frame and attemper us by degrees to the full and consummate state of it. This is that therefore we must endeavour, A growing knowledge of God, conformity to him, and satisfiedness of spirit therein. What we expect should be one day perfect, we must labour may be, in the mean time, always growing.

(1.) Our knowledge of God. The knowledge of him I here principally intend, is not notional and speculative, but (which is more ingredient to our blessedness, both inchoate and perfect) that of converse, that familiar knowledge which we usually express by the name of acquaintance. See that this knowledge of him be increased daily. Let us now use ourselves much with God. Our knowledge of him must aim at conformity to him: and how powerful a thing is converse in order hereto? How insensibly is it wont to transform men, and mould anew their spirits, language, garb, deportment? To be removed from the solitude or rudeness of the country to a city or university, what an alteration doth it make? How is such a person divested by degrees of his rusticity, of his more uncomely and aggressed manners? Objects we converse with, beget their image upon us, They walked after vanity, and became vain, (Jer. 2. 5.) saith Jeremiah; and Solomon, He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise. Pro. 13. 20, Walking is a usual expression of converse. So to converse with the holy, is the way to be holy, with heaven, the way to be heavenly, with God, the way to be God-like. Let us therefore make this our present business, much to acquaint ourselves with God. We count upon seeing him face to face, of being always in his presence beholding his glory; that speaketh very intimate acquaintance indeed. How shall we reach that pitch? What, to live now as strangers to him? Is that the way? The path of the righteous is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Prov. 4. 18. The text shews us the righteous man's end, To behold the glory of God's face, &c. it is easy to apprehend then, his way must needs have in it a growing brightness, as he comes still nearer this end. Every nearer approach to a lucid thing infers (to us) an increase of light from it. We should therefore be following on to know

the Lord, and we shall see his going forth will be before us as the morning. Hos. 6, 3. He will be still visiting us with renewed, increasing light, for such is morning-light, fresh and growing-light,) and ere long it will be perfect day. Labour we to improve our knowledge of God to such a degree of acquaintance as our present state can admit of: to be as inward with him as we can, to familiarize ourselves to him. His gospel aims at this, to make those that were afar off nigh. Far-distant objects we can have no distinct view of. He can give us little account of a person that hath only seen him afar off, so God beholds the proud afar off, that is, he will have no acquaintance with them: whereas with the humble he will be familiar; he will dwell, (as in a family) with them. Isa. 57. 15. So the ungodly behold God till he bring them in, and make them nigh; then they are no longer strangers, but of his family and household, now thoroughly acquainted. Several notes there are of a thorough acquaintance which we should endeavour may concur in our acquaintance with God, in that analogy which the case will bear:—to know his *nature;* or (as we would speak of a man,) what will please and displease him so as to be able in the whole course of our daily conversation to approve ourselves to him: to have the skill so to manage our conversation, as to continue a correspondence, not interrupted by any our offensive unpleasing demeanours: to walk worthy of God unto all well-pleasing. It concerns us most to study and endeavour this practical knowledge of the nature of God; what trust, and love, and fear, and purity, &c. his faithfulness, and greatness, his goodness, and holiness, &c. do challenge from us: what may in our daily walking be agreeable, what repugnant to the several attributes of his being. To know his *secrets*; to be as it were of the cabinet-council, (the word used by the Psalmist psal. 25. 14. hath a peculiar significancy to that purpose; to signify, not only counsel, but a council, or the consessus of persons that consult together,) this is his gracious vouchsafement, to humble, reverential souls. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; such acquaintance with him is to be sought, to know the (communicable) secrets both of his mind and heart. Of his mind, his truths, gospel-mysteries, that were kept secret from ages and generations. We have the mind of Christ. This is great inwardness, of his heart; his love, his good-will, his kind bosom thoughts towards our souls. To know his *methods*, and the course of his dispensations towards the world, his church, and especially our own spirits: this is great knowledge of God, to have the skill to trace his footsteps, and observe by comparing times with times, that such a course he more usually holds; and accordingly, with great probability, collect

from what we have seen and observed, what we may expect: what order and succession there is of storms of wrath, to clouds of sin; and again of peaceful, lucid intervals, when such storms have inferred penitential tears: in what exigencies, and distresses, humble mourners may expect God's visits and consolations: to recount in how great extremities former experience hath taught us not to despair; and from such experience still to argue ourselves into fresh reviving hopes, when the state of things (whether public or private, outward or spiritual) seems forlorn. To know the proper seasons of address to him; and how to behave ourselves most acceptably in his presence, in what dispositions and postures of spirit, we are fittest for his converse, so as to be able to come to him in a good hour, in a time when he may be found; (Psal. 32. 6.) to know his *voice:* this discovers acquaintance. The ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meats. Job. 12. 11. God's righteous ones, that are filled with the fruits of righteousness, do proportionably abound in knowledge, Phil. 1. 9. *and in all sense.* αισθητηρια γεγυμνασμενα, Heb. 5. 14. They have quick, naked, unvitiated senses, to discern between good and evil; yea, and can have the suffrage of several senses concerning the same object; they have a kind of taste in their ear. They taste the good word of God, even in his previous workings on them. Heb. 6. 5. Being new-born they are intimated to have tasted in the word how gracious the Lord is. As they grow up thereby, they have still a more judicious sense, and can more certainly distinguish, when God speaks to them, and when a stranger goes about to counterfeit his voice. John 10. They can tell at first hearing, what is grateful and nutritive, what offensive and hurtful to the divine life; what is harmonious and agreeable, what dissonant to the gospel already received, so that an angel from heaven must expect no welcome, if he bring another. To know his inward *motions* and impulses; when his hand toucheth our hearts, to be able to say this is the finger of God, there is something divine in this touch. My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved. Cant. 5. 4. This speaks acquaintance when the soul can say, I know his very touch; the least impression from him, I can distinguish it from thousands of objects that daily beat upon my heart. To understand his *looks*;* to know the meaning of his aspects, and glances of the various

* So we apprehend God proportionably more clearly as the idea we have of a person is more distinct that we have of him by the sight of his picture or face through a glass, beyond that which we have by hearing a reported description of him, though by himself unseen. This is acquaintance with God.

casts, as it were of his eye. Such things intimate friends can, in a sort, talk by, with one another; I will guide thee by mine eye; that implies an intelligent teachable subject. We have now no full-eyed appearances of God; he shews himself, looks in upon us through the lattice, through a veil, or a shadow, or a glass. That measure of acquaintance with him to be able to discern and own him in his appearances, is a great participation of heaven, utter unacquaintance with God is expressed by the denial of these two, ye have neither heard his voice, nor seen his shape, John. 5 37.

Finally, which brings us home to the text, to keep our eye intentively fixed on him, not to understand his looks only as before, but to return our own. Intimate acquaintance (when such friends meet) is much expressed, and improved by the eye, by a reciprocation of glances, or (which speaks more inwardness) more fixed views; when their eyes do even feed and feast upon each other. Thus we should endeavour to be as in a continual interview with God. How frequent mention have we of the fixed posture of his eye towards saints. To this man will I look; I have found out, as though he had said, that which shall be ever the delight of mine eye. Do not divert me, towards him I will look. What he speaks of the material temple is ultimately to be referred to that which is typified, his church, his saints, united with his Christ, Mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually; and elsewhere, He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous; he cannot (admirable grace) allow himself to look off, to turn aside his eye: and he seems impatient of the aversion of theirs, Let me see thy countenance (saith he) for it is comely.*

Is it not much more reasonable, it should be thus with us towards him? that we should be more delighted to behold real comeliness than he with what is so, only by his gracious vouchsafement and estimation? How careful should we be, that our eye may at every turn meet his; that he never look towards us, and find it in the ends of the earth, carelessly wandering from him? How well doth it become us, to set the Lord always before us: to have our eye ever towards the Lord? Psal.16.8.—25. 15. This you see is the initial, leading thing in this blessedness of heaven. So it must have also a prime ingrediency into our heaven on earth. It is a part of celestial blessedness; but it is not peculiar to it. The present blessedness the righteous enjoy here is a participation of heaven. It hath something in it of every thing that is ingredient into that perfect blessedness. Our present knowledge of God is often expressed by

* 1 King 9. 3. Job. 36. 7. Psal, 33. 18. & 34. 15. Cant. 2. 14.

vision, or sight, as we have had occasion to observe in many passages of Scripture. He hath given us such a visive power, and made it connatural to that heavenly creature, begotten of him, in all the true subjects of his blessedness. We know that we are of God, and presently it follows, he hath given us an understanding to know him that is true. 1 John. 5. 15. 20. This new man is not born blind. The blessed God himself is become liable to the view of his regenerate, intellectual eye, clarified, and filled with vigour and spirit from himself. He therefore that hath made, that hath new-formed this eye, shall not he be seen by it? shall not we turn it upon him? Why do not we more frequently bless our eye with that sight? This object (though of so high excellency and glory) will not hurt, but perfect and strengthen it. They are refreshing, vital beams that issue from it. Sure we have no excuse that we eye God so little, that is, that we mind him no more. Why have we so few thoughts of him in a day? What, to let so much time pass, and not spare him a look, a thought? Do we intend to employ ourselves an eternity in the visions of God, and is our present aversion from him, and intention upon vanity, our best preparation thereto? This loudly calls for redress. Shall God be waiting all the day, as on purpose to catch our eye, to intercept a look, and we studiously decline him, and still look another way, as of choice? and what is it but choice? Can we pretend a necessity to forget him all the day? How cheap is the expence of a look? How little would it cost us? And yet how much of duty might it express? how much of comfort and joy might it bring into us?

How great is our offence and loss, that we live not in such more constant views of God? Herein we sin and suffer both at once, things both very unsuitable to heaven. Mindfulness of God is the living spring of all holy and pleasant affections and deportments towards him; sets all the wheels a going; makes the souls as the chariots of Aminadab. These wheels have their eyes also, are guided by a mind, by an intellectual principle. Knowing, intelligent beings (as we also are by participation and according to our measure) so act mutually towards one another. We cannot move towards God but with an open eye, seeing him and our way towards him. If we close our eyes we stand still, or blindly run another course, we know not whither. All sin is darkness, whether it be neglect of good, or doing of evil: its way is a way of darkness; as a course of holy motion is walking in the light. Our shutting our eyes towards God creates that darkness; surrounds us with a darkness comprehensive of all sin. Now is every thing of enjoined duty waved, and any evil done, that sinful nature prompts us to. Well might it be said, He that sinneth hath not seen God. 1 John.

3. 6. When we have made ourselves this darkness, we fall of course under satan's empire, and are presently within his dominions. He is the prince of darkness, and can rule us now at his will. Perishing lost souls are such as in whom the God of this world hath blinded their minds. To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, is, to turn them also from the power of satan unto God. What a hell of wickedness are we brought into, in the twinkling of an eye? We are without God in the world, as if a man wink, though at noon-day, he hath as it were put out the sun, it is with him as if there were no such thing. When we have banished God out of our sight and forgotten him, it is with us as if there were no God. If such a state grow habitual to us, (as we know every sinful aversion of our eye from God tends thereto,) what wickedness is there that will not lurk in this darkness? How often in Scripture is forgetting God used as a character, yea, as a paraphase, a full, though summary, expression of sin in general? as if the wickedness, the malignity, the very hell itself of sin, were wholly included (and not connoted only) here. Now consider this (after so dreadful an enumeration, so black a catalogue) all that forget God. Psal. 50. And (as deep calleth to deep, one hell to another,) The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God. Psal. 9. That heap, that mass of wickedness, of pride, of persecution, cursing, blasphemy, deceit, and mischief, all meet in one that hath not God in all his thoughts.

But who is so hardy to look the holy God in the face, and sin against him? What an astonishment is it, when he watches over present sin, or brings forth former sins out of secret darkness and sets them in the light of his countenance? Who that understands any thing of the nature and majesty of God, dare call him for a witness of his sinning? The worst of men would find themselves under some restraint, could they but obtain of themselves, to sit down sometimes and solemnly think of God. Much more would it prove an advantage to (them whom I most intend) such as sin within the nearer call and reach of mercy: that sin not to the utmost latitude: even such as lead the strictest lives, and are seldomer found to transgress: are not their sins wont to begin with forgetting God? Did they eye God more, would they not sin less frequently, and with greater regret? You his saints, that have made a covenant with him by sacrifice, that profess the greatest love and devotedness to him and seem willing yourselves to become sacrifices, and lay down your lives for his sake; What, is it a harder thing to give him a look, a thought? or is it not too common a thing, without necessity (and then not without injury) to withhold these from him? Let us bethink ourselves, are not the principal distem-

pers of our spirits, and disorders yet observable in our lives to be referred hither? As to enjoined services: what, should we venture on omissions, if we had God in our eye? or serve him with so declining, backward hearts? Should we dare to let pass a day, in the even whereof we might write down, nothing done for God this day? or should we serve him as a hard master, with sluggish, despondent spirits? The apostle forbids servants to serve with eye-service, as men-pleasers; meaning they should eye men less, and God more. Sure, as to him, our service is not enough eye-service. We probably eye men more than we should; but we do not eye him enough. Hence such hanging of hands, such feebleness of knees, such laziness and indifferency, so little of an active zeal and laborious diligence, so little fervency of spirit in serving the Lord. Hence also such an aversion to hazardous services, such fear of attempting any thing (though never so apparent important duty) that may prove costly, or hath danger in it. We look not to him that is invisible. And as to forbidden things; should we be so proud, so passionate, so earthly, so sensual, if we had God more in view? should we so much seek ourselves, and indulge our own wills and humours, drive a design with such solicitude and intention of mind for our private interests? should we walk at such a latitude, and more consult our own inclination than our rule, allow ourselves in so much vanity of conversation, did we mind God as we ought? And do not we sensibly punish ourselves in this neglect? what a dismal chaos is this world while we see not God in it! To live destitute of a divine presence, to discern no beam of the heavenly glory; to go up and down day by day, and perceive nothing of God, no glimmering, no appearance; this is disconsolate as well as sinful darkness. What can we make of creatures, what of the daily events of providence, if we see not in them the glory of a Deity; if we do not contemplate and adore the divine wisdom, power, and goodness, diffused every-where? Our practical atheism, and inobservance of God, make the world become to us the region and shadow of death, states us as among ghosts and spectres, makes all things look with a ghastly face, imprints death upon every thing we see, encircles us with gloomy, dreadful shades, and with uncomfortable apparitions. To behold the tragical spectacles always in view, the violent lusts, the rapine and rage of some, the calamitous sufferings, the miseries and ruins of others; to hear every corner resounding with the insultations of the oppressor, and the mournful groans of the oppressed, what a painful continuing death were it to be in the world without God! At the best, all things were but a vanishing scene, an image seen in the dark. The creation, a thing, the fashion whereof were pass

ing away, the whole contexture and system of providence were mere confusion, without the least concinnity or order: religion an acknowledged trifle, a mere mockery? What, to wink ourselves into so much darkness and desolation, and by sealing up our eyes against the divine light and glory, to confirm so formidable miseries upon our own souls! How dreadfully shall we herein revenge our own folly, in nullifying him to ourselves, who is the all in all! Sure there is little of heaven in all this? But if now we open our eyes upon that all-comprehending glory, apply them to a steady intuition of God, how heavenly a life shall we then live in the world! To have God always in view, as the director and end of all our actions: to make our eye crave leave of God, to consult him before we adventure upon any thing, and implore his guidance and blessing: upon all occasions to direct our prayers to him and look up: to make our eye wait his commanding look, ready to receive all intimations of his will; this is an angelic life. To be as those ministers of his that are always ready to do his pleasure: to make our eye do him homage, and express our dependence and trust: to approve ourselves in every thing to him, and act as always in his presence, observing still how his eye observes us, and exposing ourselves willingly to its inspection and search, contented always he should see through and through us: surely there is much of heaven in this life: so we should endeavour to live here. I cannot omit to give you this instruction in the words of a heathen, *Sic certe vivendum est tanquam in conspectu vivamus, &c. We ought so to live, as always within view, order our cogitations as if some one might or can look into the very inwards of our breast. For to what purpose is it, to hide any thing from man? from God nothing can be hid; he is continually present to our spirits, and comes amidst our inmost thoughts,* &c. Sen. Epist. 83.

This is to walk in the light, amidst a serene, placid, mild light, that infuses no unquiet thoughts, admits no guilty fears, nothing that can disturb or annoy us. To eye God in all our comforts, and observe the smiling aspects of his face, when he dispenses them to us: to eye him in all our afflictions, and consider the paternal wisdom that instructs us in them; how would this increase our mercies, and mitigate our troubles? To eye him in all his creatures, and observe the various prints of the Creator's glory stamped upon them; with how lively a lustre would it cloth the world, and make every thing look with a pleasant face! what a heaven were it to look upon God, as filling all in all: and how sweetly would it, ere-while, raise our souls into some such sweet seraphic strains, holy, holy,—the whole earth is full of his glory. Isa. 6. 2, 3. To eye him in his

providences, and consider how all events are with infinite wisdom disposed into an apt subserviency to his holy will and ends: what difficulties would hence be solved! what seeming inconsistencies reconciled! and how much would it contribute to the ease and quiet of our minds? To eye him in his Christ, the express image of his person, the brightness of his glory, and in the Christian economy, the gospel revelation and ordinances, through which he manifests himself: to behold him in the posture wherein he saves souls, clad with the garments of salvation, girt with power, and appareled with love, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save: to view him addressing himself to allure and win to him the hearts of sinners, when he discovers himself in Christ, upon that reconciling design, makes grace that brings salvation appear, teaching to deny ungodliness, &c. to behold him entering into human flesh, pitching his tabernacle among men, hanging out his ensigns of peace, laying his trains, spreading his net, the cords of a man, the bands of love: to see him in his Christ, ascending the cross, lifted up to draw all men to him; and consider that mighty love of justice and of souls, both so eminently conspicuous in that stupendous sacrifice; here to fix our eyes looking to Jesus, and behold in him, him whom we have pierced: to see his power and glory, as they were wont to be seen in his sanctuaries; to observe him in the solemnities of his worship, and the graceful postures wherein he holds communion with his saints, when he seats himself amidst them on the throne of grace, receives their addresses, dispenses the tokens and pledges of his love: into what transports might these visions put us every day!

Let us then stir up our drowsy souls, open our heavy eyes, and turn them upon God, inure and habituate them to a constant view of his (yet veiled) face, that we may not see him only by casual glances, but as those that seek his face, and make it our business to gain a thorough knowledge of him. But let us remember, that all our present visions of God must aim at a further conformity to him: they must design imitation not the satisfying of curiosity; our looking must not therefore be an inquisitive, busy prying into the unrevealed things of God. Carefully abstain from such over-bold presumptuous looks. But remember, we are to eye God as our pattern. Wherein he is to be so, he hath plainly enough revealed and proposed himself to us. And consider, this is the pattern, both to which we ought, and to which we shall be conformed (if we make it our business;) so will sense of duty, and hope of success concur to fix our eye and keep it steady. Especially, let us endeavour to manage and guide our eye aright, in beholding him, that our sight of him may most effectually subserve this design of being like

him; and herein nothing will be more conducible, than that our looks be qualified with—reverence, and—love.

[1.] Let them be reverential looks. We shall never be careful to imitate a despised pattern, or that we think meanly of. When this is the intimate sense of our soul, Who is a God like unto thee in holiness! There is none holy as the Lord: this will set our powers on work; such sights will command and over-awe our souls into conformity to him. Subjects have sometimes affected to imitate the very imperfections and deformities of their adored prince, Let us greaten our thoughts of God Look to him with a submissive, adoring eye. Let every look import worship and subjection. Who can stand before apprehended sovereign majesty with such a temper of soul as shall signify an affront to it? This will make every thing as suitable to God yield and render our souls susceptible of all divine and holy impressions.

[2.] Let them be friendly and (as far may consist with that reverence) amorous looks. It is natural to affect and endeavour likeness to them we love. Let love always sit in our eye, and inspirit it; this will represent God always amiable, will infinitely commend us to his nature and attributes, and even ravish us into his likeness. The loving spouse often glories, to wear her beloved husband's picture on her breast. The love of God will much more make us affect to bear his image in our hearts. His law is a true representation of him, and *love* in the fulfilling of that law, an exemplification of it in ourselves. Love will never enter a quarrel, nor admit of any disagreement with God. His more terrible appearances will be commendable in the eye of love. It thinks no evil. But so interprets and comments upon his severer aspects, whether through his law or providence, as to judge all amiable, and frame the soul to an answerable deportment.

(2.) In this way then let us endeavour a growing conformity unto God. It hath been much (and not unnecessarily) inculcated already, that the blessedness of the righteous hereafter, doth not consist merely in beholding an external, objective glory, but in being also glorified. They are happy by a participated glory: by being made like God, as well as seeing his glorious likeness; whereby the constitution of their spirits is changed and reduced to that excellent, harmonious, agreeable temper, that holy composure and peaceful state from which blessedness is inseparable. As far as we are capable of blessedness in this world, it must be so with us here. Glory without us will not make us happy in heaven; much less will any thing without us make us happy on earth. It is an idle dream, of sickly, crazy minds, that their blessedness consists in some external good, that is separable and distant from them; which therefore as they blindly guess,

they uncertainly pursue; never aiming to become good, without which they can never know what it is to be blessed. What felicity are men wont to imagine to themselves in this or that change of their outward condition; were their state such or such, then they were happy, and should desire no more? As the child's fancy suggests to it, if it were on the top of such a hill, it could touch the heavens, but when with much toil it hath got thither, it finds itself as far off as before. We have a shorter and more compendious way to it, would we allow ourselves to understand it. A right temper of mind involves blessedness in itself: it is this only change we need to endeavour. We wear out our days in vanity and misery, while we neglect this work, and busy ourselves to catch a fugitive shadow, that hovers about us. It can never be well, till our own souls be a heaven to us, and blessedness be a domestic, a home-dwelling inhabitant there. Till we get a settled principle of holy quietude into our own breasts, and become the sons of peace, with whom the peace of God may find entrance and abode: till we have that treasure within us, that may render us insensible of any dependance on a foreign good, or fear of a foreign evil. Shall that be the boast and glory of a philosopher only, "I carry all my goods with me wherever I go? And that a virtuous, good man is liable to no hurt? Seneca (epis. 92.) thinks they discover a low spirit, that say, externals can add any thing (though but a very little) to the felicity of an honest mind; as if (saith he) men could not be content with the light of the sun without the help of a candle or a spark?" And speaking of the constancy of the virtuous man, (saith he) "They do ill that say, such an evil is tolerable to him, such a one intolerable, and that confine the greatness of his mind within certain bounds and limits." Adversity (he tells us) overcomes us, if it be not wholly overcome. Epicurus (saith he) the very patron of your sloth acknowledges yet, that unhappy events can seldom disturb the mind of a virtuous person, (and he adds,) how had he almost uttered the voice of a man! I pray, (saith he,) speak out a little more boldly, and say he is above them altogether."* Such apprehensions the more virtuous heathens have had of the efficacy and defensative power of moral goodness, however defective their notion might be of the thing itself. Hence Socrates the pagan martyr is reported to have cried out, (when those persons were persecuting him to death,) Anytus and Meletus can kill me, but they cannot hurt me. And Anaxarchus the philosopher, having sharply reproved Nicocreon, and being by him ordered

* Max. Tyr. dissert. 2. who adds, For a good man cannot receive detriment from an evil man.

to be beaten to death with iron mallets, bids, strike on, strike on, thou mayst (saith he) break in pieces this vessel of Anaxarchus, but Anaxarchus himself thou canst not touch. Diogen: Laert. Anaxarchus.

Shall christianity here confess itself outvied? shall we, to the reproach of our religion, yield the day to pagan-morality, and renew the occasion of the ancient complaint, *Non præstat fides quod præstitit infidelitas, that the faith of christians is out-done by the heathen infidelity?* It is, I remember, the challenge of Cecilius in Minucius. "There is Socrates (saith he) the prince of wisdom, whosoever of you christians is great enough to attempt it, let him imitate him if he can. Methinks we should be ambitious to tell the world in our lives, (for christians should live great things, not speak them,*) that a greater than Socrates is here: to let them see in us our represented pattern: to show forth higher virtues than those of Socrates; even his, who hath called us out of darkness into his glorious and marvellous light. Certain it is, that the sacred oracles of the gospel set before us a more excellent pattern, and speak things not less magnificent, but much more modest and perspicuous: with less pomp of words they give us a much clearer account of a far more excellent temper of mind, and prescribe the direct and certain way of attaining it. Do but view over the many passages of Scripture occasionally glanced at, chap. 7. But we grope as in the dark for blessedness; we stumble at noon-day as in the night, and wander as if we had no eyes; we mistake our business, and lay the scene of a happy state at a great distance from us, in things which we cannot reach, and which if we could it were to little purpose.

Not to speak of greater sensualists, (whom at present I have less in my eye,) Is there not a more refined sort of persons, that neglecting the great business of inspecting, and labouring to better and improve their spirits, are wholly taken up about the affairs of another sphere, that are more solicitous for better times, for a better world, than better spirits; that seem to think all the happiness they are capable of on earth, is bound up in this or that external state of things? Not that the care of all public concernments should be laid aside; least of all, a just solicitude for the church's welfare: but that should not be pretended, when our own interest is the one thing with us. And when we are really solicitous about the church's interests, we should state them aright. God designs the afflictions of his people for their spiritual good, therefore that is a much greater good than their exemption from suffering these evils; otherwise

* As this Author's expression is.

his means should eat up his end; and be more expensive than that will countervail; which were an imprudence no man of tolerable discretion would be guilty of. We should desire the outward prosperity of Sion, for it is a real good; but inasmuch as it hath in it the goodness, not of an *end*, but only (and that but sometimes neither) of a *means*; not a constant but a mutual goodness; not a principal, but a lesser subordinate goodness; we must not desire it absolutely, nor chiefly, but with submissive limited desires. If our hearts are grieved to hear of the sufferings of the church of God in the world, but not of their sins; If we more sensibly regret at any time, the persecutions and oppressions they undergo, than their spiritual distempers, their earthliness, pride, cold love to God, fervent animosities towards each other; it speaks an uninstructed carnal mind. We take no right measure of the interests of religion, or the church's welfare, and do most probably mistake ourselves as much in our judging of our own; and measure theirs by our mistaken model.

And this is the mischievous cheat many put upon their own souls, and would obtrude too often upon others too; that overlooking the great design of the gospel, to transform men's spirits and change them into the divine likeness, they think it is religion enough to espouse a party, and adopt an opinion; and then vogue themselves friends to religion according to the measure of their zeal for their own party or opinion; and give a very pregnant proof of that zeal, by magnifying or invei ghing against the times, according as they favour or frown npont their empty, unspirited religion. It being indeed such (a secret consciousness whereof they herein bewray) as hath no other life in it, than what it owes to external favour and countenance. And therefore all public rebukes are justly apprehended mortal to it; whereas the substantial religion that adequately answers the design, and is animated by the spirit of the gospel, possesses the souls of them that own it, with a secure confidence, that it can live in any times, and hold their souls in life also. Hence they go on their way with a free unsolicitous cheerfulness, enjoying silently in their own bosoms, that repose and rest which naturally results from a sound and well-composed temper of spirit. They know their happiness depends upon nothing without them.* That they hold it by a better tenure than that of the

* Ιδιωτȣ ςασις και χαρακτηρ, ȣδεποτε εξ εαυτȣ προςδοκα ωφελειαν η βλαβην, αλλ απο των εξω Φιλοσοφȣ ςασις και χαρακτηρ, πασαν ωφελειαν και βλαβην εξ εαυτȣ προσδοκα. It is the condition and character of a common man to expect happiness or injury, not from himself, but from things external, it is that of a philosopher to expect all happiness from himself.

world's courtesy. They can be quiet in the midst of storms, and abound in the want of all things. They can in patience possess their own souls, and in them a vital spring of true pleasure, when they are driven out of all other possessions. They know the living sense of these words, That the good man is satisfied from himself: that to be spiritually-minded is life and peace: that nothing can harm them that are followers of the good: that the way to see good days, is to keep their tongue from evil, and their lips from speaking guile, to depart from evil and do good, to seek peace and pursue it. They cannot live in bad times; they carry that about them that will make the worst days good to them. Surely they can never be happy in the best times, that cannot be so in any. Outward prosperity is quite besides the purpose to a distempered soul; when nothing else troubles, it will torment itself. Besides, we cannot command at pleasure the benign aspects of the world, the smiles of the times; we may wait a life's-time, and still find the same adverse posture of things towards us from without. What dotage is it to place our blessedness in something to us impossible, that lies wholly out of our power: and in order whereto we have nothing to do, but sit down and wish; and either faintly hope, or ragingly despair? We cannot change times and seasons, nor alter the course of the world, create new heavens and new earth. Would we not think ourselves mocked, if God should command us these things in order to our being happy? It is not our business, these are not the affairs of our own province (blessed be God it is not so large) further than as our bettering ourselves may conduce thereto; and this is that which we may do and ought, it is our proper work, in obedience and subordination to God as his instruments, to govern and cultivate our own spirits, to intend the affairs of that his kingdom in us (where we are his authorized viceroys,) that consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. We can be benign to ourselves, if the world be not so to us; cherish and adorn our inward man; that though the outward man be exposed daily to perish (which we cannot help, and therefore it concerns us not to take thought about it,) the inward may be renewed day by day. We can take care that our souls may prosper, that through our oscitant neglect they be not left to languish and pine away in their own iniquities. They may be daily fed with the heavenly hidden manna, and with the fruits of the paradise of God; they may enjoy at home a continual feast, and with a holy freedom luxuriate in divine pleasures, the joys wherewith the strangers intermeddle not, if we be not unpropitious and unkind to ourselves.

And would we know wherein that sound and happy complexion of spirit lies, that hath so much of heaven in it: It is a present gradual participation of the divine likeness. It consists in being conformed to God; it is, as the moralists tell us, *Denique ut breviter tibi formulam scribam; talis animus sapientis viri esse debet qualis Deum decet* (Sen. epist.) *If one would give a short compendious model of it, such a temper of mind as becomes God;* or to give an account of it, in his own words, who prescribes it, and who is himself the highest pattern of this blessed frame, It is to be transformed in the renewing of our minds so as to be able to prove what is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; (Rom. 12. 2.) that is, experimentally to find it in ourselves, impressed and wrought into our own spirits, so as to have the complacential relish and savour of its goodness, excellency and pleasantness diffused through our souls. Where remember, this was written to such as were supposed saints; whence it must be understood, of a continued progressive transformation, a renewing of the inward man day by day, (as is the apostle's expression elsewere.) It is a more perfect reception of the impress of God, revealing himself in the gospel; the growth and tendency of the new creature, begotten unto the eternal blessedness, towards its mature and most perfect state and stature in the fruition thereof.

And it is this I am now pressing; inasmuch as some account hath been already given (according as we can now imperfectly guess at it, and spell it out) what the constitution of the holy soul is, in its glorified state, when it perfectly partakes the divine likeness; that when we find in ourselves any principles, and first elements of that blessed frame, we would endeavour the gradual improvement thereof, and be making towards that perfection. This therefore being our present work, let it be remembered wherein this participated likeness of God hath been said to consist; and labour now the nearest approach to that pitch and state. Your measures must be taken from what is most perfect, come now as near it as you can, and as that pagan's advice is; "If yet thou art not Socrates, however live as one that would fain be Socrates." Epictet. Though yet thou art not perfect, live as one that aims at it, and would be so. Only it must be considered, that the conformity to God, of our present state, is in extent, larger and more comprehensive than that of our future; though it be unspeakably less perfect in degree. For there is no moral excellency (that we have any present knowledge of) belonging to our glorified state, which is not

in some degree, necessarily to be found in saints on earth. But there are some things which the exigency of our present state makes necessary to us here, which will not be so in the state of glory; repentance, faith, as it respects the mediator, in order to our future happiness; patience of injuries, pity to the distressed, &c. These things, and whatsoever else, whose objects cease, must be understood to cease with them. In short, *here* is requisite all that moral good which concerns both our end and way; *there*, what concerns our end only.

Yet is the whole compass of that gracious frame of spirit, requisite in this our present state, all comprehended in conformity to God. Partly, inasmuch as some of these graces, which will cease hereafter, in their exercise, as not having objects to draw them forth into act, have their pattern in some communicable attributes of God, which will cease also, as to their denomination and exercise; their objects then ceasing too, as his patience towards sinners, his mercy to the miserable. Partly inasmuch as other of those graces now required in us, though they correspond to nothing in God that is capable of the same name, as faith in a Saviour, repentance of sin (which can have no place in God) they yet answer to something in his nature, that goes under other names; and is the reason wherefore he requires such things in us. He hath in his nature that faithfulness and all sufficient fulness, that challenges our faith; and that hatred of sin, which challenges our repentance for it, having been guilty of it. His very nature obliges him to require those things from us, the state of our case being considered. So that the sum even of our present duty lies in receiving this entire impression of the divine likeness, (in some part invariably and eternally necessary to us, in some part necessary with respect to our present state.) And herein is our present blessedness also involved. If therefore we have any design to better our condition in point of blessedness, it must be our business to endeavour after a fuller participation of that likeness, in all the particulars it comprehends. You can pitch your thoughts upon no part of it, which hath not an evident direct tendency to the repose and rest of your spirits. I shall commend only some few instances, that you may see how little reason and inducement a soul conformed to the holy will of God, hath to seek its comforts and contents elsewhere. Faith corresponds to the truth of God, as it respects divine revelations. How pleasant is it to give up our understandings to the conduct of so safe a guide; to the view of so admirable things as he reveals! It corresponds to his goodness, as it respects its offers.

How delectable is it to be filling an empty soul from the divine fulness! What pleasure attends the exercise of this faith towards the person of the Mediator, viewing him in all his glorious excellencies, receiving him in all his gracious communications by this eye and hand. How pleasant is it to exercise it in reference to another world! living by it in a daily prospect of eternity; in reference to this world, to live without care in a cheerful dependance on him that hath undertaken to care for us!

Repentance is that by which we become like the holy God: to whom our sin hath made us most unlike before. How sweet are kindly relentings, penetential tears, and the return of the soul to its God, and to a right mind! And who can conceive the ravishing pleasures of love to God! wherein we not only imitate, but intimately unite with him, who is love itself. How pleasant to let our souls dissolve here, and flow into the ocean the element of love! Our fear corresponds to his excellent greatness. And is not (as it is a part of the new creature in us) a tormenting, servile passion, but a due respectfulness and observance of God; and there is no mean pleasure in that holy awful seriousness unto which it composes and forms our spirits. Our humility, as it respects him, answers his high excellency; as it respects our own inferiors, his gracious condescension. How pleasant is it to fall before him! And how connatural and agreeable to a good spirit, to stoop low, upon any occasion to do good! Sincerity is a most God-like excellency; an imitation of his truth, as grounded in his all-sufficiency; which sets him above the necessity or possibility of any advantage by collusion or deceit; and corresponds to his omnisciency and heart-searching eye. It heightens a man's spirit to a holy and generous boldness: makes him apprehend it beneath him to do an unworthy, dishonest action, that should need a palliation, or a concealment.* And gives him the continual pleasure of self-approbation to God, whom he chiefly studies and desires to please. Patience, a prime glory of the divine majesty, continues a man's possession of his own soul, his liberty, his dominion of himself. He is (if he can suffer nothing) a slave to his vilest and most sordid passions at home, his own base fear, and brutish anger, and effeminate grief, and to any man's lusts and humours besides, that he apprehends can do him hurt. It keeps a man's soul in a peaceful calm, delivers him from (that most unnatural)

* As that noble Roman whom his architect (about to build him a house) promised to contrive it free from all his neighbours inspection; he replies, nay, if thou have any art in thee, build my house so that all may see what I do. Vell. Pat. p. 32.

self-torment, defeats the impotent malice of his most implacable enemy, who fain would vex him, but cannot. Justice, the great attribute of the judge of all the earth, as such; so far as the impression of it takes place among men, preserves the common peace of the world, and the private peace of each man in his own bosom, so that the former be not disturbed by doing of mutual injuries, nor the latter by the conscience of having done them. The brotherly love of fellow-christians; the impression of that special love, which God bears to them all, admits them into one anothers bosoms, and to all the endearments and pleasures of a mutual communion. Love to enemies, the express image of our heavenly Father; by which we appear his children, begotten of him; overcomes evil by goodness, blunts the double edge of revenge; at least the sharper edge, (which is always towards the author of it,) secures, ourselves from wounding impressions and resentments; turns keen anger into gentle pity; and substitutes mild pleasant forgiveness, in the room of the much uneasier thoughts and study of retaliation. Mercifulness toward the distressed, as our Father in heaven is merciful, heaps blessing upon our souls, and evidences, our title to what we are to live by, the divine mercy. A universal benignity and propension to do good to all; an imitation of the immense, diffusive goodness of God, is but kindness to ourselves, rewards itself by that greater pleasure is in giving than in receiving; and associates us with God in the blessedness of this work, as well as in the disposition to it; who exercises loving kindness in the earrh, because he delighteth therein.

Here are some of the μιμηματα της Θειας ζωης, or *the things wherein consists that our conformity to the divine nature and will, which is proper to our present state.* And now, who can estimate the blessedness of such a soul? Can (in a word) the state of that soul be unhappy that is full of the Holy Ghost, full of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, those blessed fruits of that blessed Spirit? Blessedness is connaturalized unto this soul: every thing doth its part, and all conspire to make it happy. This soul is a temple, an habitation of holiness. Here dwells a Deity in his glory. It is a paradise, a garden of God. Here he walks and converses daily, delighted with its fragrant fruitfulness. He that hath those things and aboundeth, is not barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus: He is the sun, and the knowledge of him, the quickening beams that cherish and ripen these fruits, But the soul that lacketh these things is a desert, a habitation of devils. Here is stupid, disconsolate infidelity, inflexibleobstinacy and resolvedness for hell, hatred and con-

tempt of the sovereign majesty; whom yet, its secret misgiving thoughts tell it, will be too hard for it at last. Here is swollen pride and giddy vain-glory, disguised hypocrisy and pining envy, raging wrath and ravenous avarice, with what you can imagine besides, leading to misery and desolation.

You have then some prospect of a happy temper of spirit. It can now be no difficulty to you, to frame an idea of it in your thoughts, to get a notional image (or this likeness in the notion of it) into your minds; but that will avail you little, if you have not the real image also; that is, your spirits really fashioned and formed according thereto: if having the knowledge of these things, (as the pagan moralist's expression, beforementioned, is of virtuous rules and precepts, *Philosophia hæc dividitur in scientiam, et habitum animi, unam illam qui didicit et facienda ac vitanda præcepit nondum sapiens est nisi in ea quæ didicit animus ejus transfiguratus est.** Sen ex Agrippa epist. 94.) they become not habitual to you, and your spirits be not transfigured in them. But now, I treat with such as are supposed to have some such real impressions, that they may be stirred up to endeavour a further perfecting of them. In order whereto, I shall add but this two-fold advice:

[1.] Be very careful that this living image (such you have been formerly told it is) may grow equally in every part. See that the impression of this likeness be entire, that it be not a maimed thing; if it be, God will never own it as his production. Integrity is the glory of a christian: to be entire, lacking nothing. This is the soundness of heart that excludes a blushing consciousness and misgiving; exempts it from the fear of a shameful discovery. Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; is paraphrased, by having respect to all God's commandments; (Psal. 119. 6. 80.) to which is opposite, that being partial in the law, spoken of by the prophet (Mal. 2. 9.) by way of complaint concerning the priests of that time. A thing hateful in the eye of God, and as uncomfortable to ourselves, as to be without a leg or an arm. And see that it be preserved entire by a proportional and uniform growth, that fresh life and motion may daily appear in every limb of this heavenly new creature. How odious a deformity is it, when a shew of moral virtues excludes godliness? And how much more odious (inasmuch as there is more impudent falsehood in it, and more dishonourable reflection upon God) when under a high pretence of godliness, any shall allow themselves in visible immorality? What, to be oppressive, envious, contentious, deceitful, proud, turbulent, wrathful, morose, malicious, fretful, and peevish, and yet

* This kind of philophosy is divided into the science and the habit of the mind, &c. Vide page 132.

a christian? What serious person, that shall have no fairer representation of Christianity than such do give, would not be ready to say rather, *Sit anima mea cum Philosophis, If this be Christian religion, give me honest paganism?* A christian that hath received the proper, uniform, entire impress of the gospel of Christ, is the most meek, mild, calm, harmless, thing in the world. Never mention so venerable a name, if you will not be jealous of the honour of it. Will you give God occasion to charge you, Wretch, I never had had this dishonour, if thou hadst never been called a christian; thou art a christian to no purpose, or to very bad; it does thee no good, and it injures me? But (which is more directly considerable as to our present purpose) the neglect and consequent decay of any gracious principle, infers a langour, a consumption and enfeeblement of all. Any such perverse disposition doth not affect that part only, is not only an impairment to the contrary gracious principle, but (as a cancer in some exterior part of the body) it gradually creeps up till it invade the vitals. Can the love of God live and grow in an unquiet, angry, uncharitable breast? Consider, Jam. 1. 26. 1 John. 3. 17.

[2.] Be constantly intent upon this business of spiritual growth. Mind it as a design, make a solemn purposed business of it, your great daily business. You do not till your ground by chance, as a casual thing; but you do it industriously, and of set purpose. The apostle speaking of his own method of pursuing conformity to Christ, (Phil. 3. 8.) tells us, he did in comparison, count all things else loss and dog's meat; he threw every thing else aside. Then next he recounts with himself, how far short he was; Not as if I had already attained, &c. (ver. 12.) (where by the way he intimates, that to stand still, and give over further endeavours, implies that gross absurdity, as if we thought ourselves to have attained already, to be already perfect; are we not ashamed to seem so conceited of ourselves?) and then still as he did attain in this pursuit he forgot what was behind; (ver. 12, 13.) and held on his course with fresh and constant vigour, still reaching forth and pressing onward towards his designed mark.

In this great business we alas! seem to dream. He that hath been observed ten or twenty years ago to be proud, and covetous, or passionate, still remains so, and we apprehend not the incongruity of it. What, always learning, and yet never come to the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, to the putting off the old man, and putting on the new? Who would meddle with any profession upon such terms, to be always doing and yet to do nothing? Surely it must be imputed to this, we design not, we do not seriously intend the perfecting of holiness,

to make a real progress in our way and work, and to get still nearer heaven, as we draw nearer to the end of our days on earth. We too contentedly confine ourselves within certain limits and aim not, as we should at a spiritual excellency. This is the temper of many that have long trodden the path of (at least an external) religion; they will go but their own pace, and that within a self-prescribed round or circle. They perform their stated task of religious exercises, and shun the grosser vices of the time; and resolve never to go higher: much like the character that was once given of a great man, (*Tiberius,*) *Neque enim eminentes virtutes sectabatur, et rursum vitia oderat: that he followed not the more eminent virtues, and yet that he hated vice.* Tacit. Annal. And it is a true censure that a barbarian, (Thespesion, Philostro. in vit. Apollon. Tyan,) is said to have given of that middle temper, that dull indifferency: Παν γαρ ο τιμης τε, και τιμωριας εσον αφεστηκεν, απω αρετη: *what is equally distant from being the matter either of praise or punishment, is upon no terms to be accounted a virtue.* At least, we drive not on a design of growth and self-improvement in our spiritual states with that constancy we ought; we are off and on; our spirits are not steadily intent; we are unstable as water, how can we excel? (Gen. 49. 4.) God hath not put us, sure, upon so fruitless a task, wherein our utmost labour and diligence shall profit nothing. Therefore strive more vigorously, and pray with more earnest importunity. Consider and plead it with God, that he hath set before thee the hope of such a state, wherein thou art to be perfectly like him; and shalt thou (that must hereafter be like God) be now like a clod of earth? Thou art now a child begotten of him; and though thou art yet in the minority, yet may not somewhat be spared out of so fair an estate, hereafter designed for thee, as that thou mayst now live worthy of such a Father, and suitable to thy expected inheritance.

(3.) And now, a contented, satisfied temper of spirit, as I have told you, results from the other two; and will therefore follow of course upon growing knowledge of God, and conformity to him, as the latter of these also doth upon the former. Yea, it is a part of our conformity to God; but a part consequent to the impression of the things mentioned under the former head, as knowledge also is a part previous and antecedent thereto. It is in the state of glory, we see, something superadded. The likeness impressed is pre-supposed; satisfaction follows thereupon. The case is so too in our present state; contentment is spoken of as a thing consequent and superadded; Godliness with contentment. A satisfied contented spirit, when it is the

result of Godliness, (of the divine image impressed,) is indeed great gain. Yet as to this I shall only say these two things.

[1.] Be distinct and explicit in the proposal of it as an end. Religion doth not brutify men, but make them more rational. Its business is to guide them to blessedness. It must therefore pitch their eyes upon it, as the mark and end they are to aim at, and hold them intent there. It is ingenuous, and honourable to God, that we should expressly avow it. We come to him for satisfaction to our spirits, not knowing whither else to apply ourselves. We turn our eyes upon him, we lay open our souls to receive impressions from him, for this very end. This is an explicit acknowledgment of him as God, our highest sovereign good.

[2.] Actually apply and accommodate divine visions and communications to this purpose. Say, "O my soul, now come solace thyself in this appearance of God; come, take thy allowed pleasure in such exertions of God, as thou dost now experience in thyself." Recount thy happiness; think how great it is, how rich thou art; on purpose that thy spirit may grow more daily into a satisfied, contented frame. Often bethink thyself, What is the great God doing for me, that he thus reveals and imparts himself to my soul! O how great things do those present pledges pre-signify to me! that thou mayst still more and more like thy portion, and account it fallen in pleasant places, so as never to seek satisfaction in things of another kind; though thou must still continue expecting and desiring more of the same kind. And remember to this purpose, there cannot be a greater participation of the misery of hell before-hand, than a discontented spirit perpetually restless and weary of itself; nor of the blessedness of heaven, than in a well-pleased, satisfied, contented frame of spirit.

CHAP. XIX.

Rule 5. Directing to raise our desires above the actual or possible attainments of this our present, and terminate them upon the future consummate state of blessedness. The rule explained and pressed by sundry considerations. Rule 6. That we add to a desirous pursuit, a joyful expectation of this blessedness: which is pursued by certain subordinate directions.

5. THAT notwithstanding all our present or possible attainments in this imperfect state on earth, we direct fervent vigorous desires towards the perfect and consummate state of glory itself; not designing to ourselves a plenary satisfaction and rest in any thing on this side of it. That is, that forgetting what is behind, we reach forth not only to what is immediately before us, the next step to be taken; but that our eye and desire aim forward at the ultimate period of our race, terminate upon the eternal glory itself; and that not only as a measure, according to which we would some way proportion our present attainments, but as the very mark, which (itself) we would fain hit and reach home to. And that this be not only the habitual bent and tendency of our spirits; but that we keep up such desires, in frequent (and as much as is possible) continual exercise. Yea, and that such actual desires be not only faint and sluggish wishes, but full of lively efficacy and vigour; in some measure proportionable to our last end and highest good; beyond and above which we neither esteem nor expect any other enjoyment. Whatsoever we may possibly attain to here, we should still be far from projecting to ourselves a state of rest on this side consummate glory, but still urge ourselves to a continual ascent; so as to mount above, not only all enjoyments of any other kind, but all degrees of enjoyment in this kind, that are beneath perfection.

Still it must be remembered, this is not the state of our final rest. The mass of glory is yet in reserve, we are not yet so high as the highest heavens. If we gain but the top of mount Tabor, we are apt to say, It is good to be here, and forget the

longer journey yet before us, loth to think of a further advance; when, were our spirits right, how far soever we may suppose ourselves to have attained, it would be matter of continual joy to us to think, high perfections are still attainable; that we are yet capable of greater things, than what we have hitherto compassed; our souls can yet comprehend more. Nature intends what is most perfect in every creature; methinks the divine nature in the new creature, should not design lower, or cease aspiring, till it have attained its ultimate perfection, its culminating point; till grace turn into glory. Let us therefore, christians, bestir ourselves, let us open and turn our eyes upon the eternal glory. Let us view it well, and then demand of our own souls, why are our desires so faint and slothful? why do they so seldom pierce through the intervening distance, and reach home to what they professedly level at; so rarely touch this blessed mark? How can we forbear to be angry with ourselves, that so glorious an end should not more powerfully attract; that our hearts should not more sensibly find themselves drawn; and all the powers of the soul be set on work by the attractive power of that glory? It certainly concerns us, not to sit still under so manifest a distemper. But if the proposal of the object, the discourse (all this while) of this blessed state, do not move us to make some further trials with ourselves, see what urging and reasoning with our souls, what rubbing and chafing our hearts will do. And there is a two-fold trial we may in this kind make upon our spirits:—what the sense of *shame* will work with us; whether our hearts cannot be made sensible to suppose how vile and wretched a temper it is to be undesirous of glory. And then what sense of *praise* can effect; or what impression it may make upon us to consider the excellency and worth, the high reasonableness of that temper and posture of soul which I am now persuading to, a continual desirousness of that blessed, glorious state.

(1.) As to the former. Let us bethink ourselves, Can we answer it to God or to our own souls, that we should indulge ourselves in a continual negligence of our eternal blessedness? a blessedness consisting in the vision and participation of the divine glory? Have we been dreaming all this while, that God, hath been revealing to us this glorious state, and setting this lovely prospect before our eyes? Did it become us, not to open our eyes while he was opening heaven to us, and representing the state which he designed to bring us to? or will we say, We have seen it and yet desire it not? Have we been deaf and dead while he hath been calling us into eternal glory; have all our senses been bound up all this while? Hath he been speaking all along to senseless statues, to stocks and stones, while he

expected reasonable, living souls should have received the voice, and have returned an obedient, complying answer? And what answer could be expected to such a call (a call to his glory) below this, We desire it Lord, we could fain be there. And if we say we have not been all this while asleep, we saw the light that shone upon us, we heard the voice that called to us; wherewith shall we then excuse ourselves, that our desires were not moved, that our souls were not presently in a flame? Was it then, that we thought all a mere fiction; that we durst not give credit to his word, when it brought us the report of the everlasting glory? Will we avow this? Is this, that we will stand by? Or what else have we left to say? Have we a more plausible reason to alledge, that the discovery of such a glory moved us not to desire it, than that we believed it not? Sure this is the truth of our case. We should feel this heavenly fire always burning in our breasts, if our infidelity did not quench the coal. If we did believe, we could not but desire. But doth not the thoughts of this shake our very souls, and fill us with horror and trembling? We that should be turned into indignation, and ready to burn ourselves with our own flame, and all about us, if one should give us the lie; that we should dare to put the lie upon the *eternal truth:* upon him whose word gave stability and being to the world, who made and sustains all things by it! That awful word! That word that shivers rocks, and melts down mountains, that makes the animate creation tremble, that can in a moment blast all things, and dissolve the frame of heaven and earth, (which in the mean time it upholds:) is that become with us fabulous, lying breath! Those God-breathed oracles, those heavenly records, which discover and describe this blessed state, are they false and foolish legends? Must that be pretended at last (if men durst) that is so totally void of all pretences? What should be the gain or advantage accruing to that eternal, all-sufficient Being? What accession should be made to that infinite self-fulness by deluding a worm? Were it consistent with his nature; what could be his design to put a cheat upon poor mortal dust? If thou dare not impute it to him; such a deception had a beginning, but what author canst thou imagine of it, or what end? Did it proceed from a good man or a bad? Could a good and honest mind form so horribly wicked a design, to impose a universal delusion, and lie upon the world, in the name of the true and holy God? Or could a wicked mind frame a design so directly levelled against wickedness? Or is there any thing so aptly and naturally tending to form the world to sobriety, holiness, purity of conversation, as the discovery of this future state of glory? And since the belief of future felicity is known to obtain universally among men, who

could be the author of so common a deception? If thou hadst the mind to impose a lie upon all the world, what course wouldst thou take? How wouldst thou lay the design? Or why dost thou in this case imagine what thou knowest not how to imagine? And dost thou not without scruple believe many things of which thou never hadst so unquestionable evidence? Or must that faith, which is the foundation of thy religion and eternal hopes, be the most suspected, shaking thing with thee; and have, of all other, the least stability and rootedness in thy soul? If thou canst not excuse thy infidelity, be ashamed of thy so cold and sluggish desires of this glorious state.

And doth it not argue a low, sordid spirit, not to desire and aim at the perfection thou art capable of; not to desire that blessedness which alone is suitable and satisfying to a reasonable and spiritual being? Bethink thyself a little; How low art thou sunk into the dirt of the earth? how art thou plunged into the miry ditch, that even thine own clothes might abhor thee? Is the Father of spirits thy father? is the world of spirits thy country? hast thou any relation to that heavenly progeny? art thou allied to that blessed family; and yet undesirous of the same blessedness? Canst thou savour nothing but what smells of the earth? Is nothing grateful to thy soul, but what is corrupted by so vicious and impure a tincture? Are all thy delights centred in a dunghill; and the polluted pleasures of a filthy world better to thee than the eternal visions and enjoyments of heaven? What art thou all made of earth? Is thy soul stupified into a clod? Hast thou no sense with thee of any thing better and more excellent? Canst thou look upon no glorious thing with a pleased eye? Are things only desirable and lovely to thee, as they are deformed? O consider the corrupted, distempered state of thy spirit, and how vile a disposition it hath contracted to itself! Thine, looks too like the *mundane* spirit; the spirit of the world. The apostle speaks of it διακριτικως, *by way of distinction*; ειδωμεν. 1 Cor. 2. 12. We have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is from God, that we might know, or see (and no doubt it is desire that animates that eye; it is not bare speculative intuition and no more) the things freely given us of God. Surely he whose desire doth not guide his eye to the beholding of those things, hath received the spirit of the world only. A spirit that conforms him to this world, makes him think only thoughts of this world, and drive the designs of this world, and speak the language of this world. A spirit that connaturalizes him to the world, makes him of a temper suitable to it: he breathes only worldly breath, carries a worldly aspect, is of a worldly conversation. O poor low spirit, that such a world

should withhold thee from the desire and pursuit of such glory! Art thou not ashamed to think what thy desires are wont to pitch upon, while they decline and wave this blessedness? Methinks thy very shame should compel thee to quit the name of a saint or a man: to forbear numbering thyself with any that pretend to immortality, and go seek pasture among the beasts of the field, with them that live that low, animal life that thou dost, and expect no other.

And when thou so fallest in with the world, how highly dost thou gratify the pretending and usurping god of it? The great fomenter of the sensual, worldly genius: the spirit itself that works in the children of disobedience, (Eph. 2. 2. 3.) and makes them follow the course of the world, holds them fast bound in worldly lusts, and leads them captive at his will; causes them (after his own serpentine manner) to creep and crawl in the dust of the earth. He is most intimate to this apostate world; informs it (as it were) and actuates it in every part; is even one great soul to it. The whole world lies in that wicked one, (1 John. 5. 19.) as the body, by the best philosophers, is said to be in the soul. The world is said to be convicted when he is judged. John 16. 8—12. He having fallen from a state of blessedness in God, hath involved the world with himself in the same apostacy and condemnation; and labours to keep them fast in the bands of death. The great Redeemer of souls makes this his business, to loose and dissolve the work of the devil. 1 John 3. 8. With that wicked one thou compliest against thy own soul and the Redeemer of it, while thou neglectest to desire and pursue this blessedness. This is thy debasement, and his triumph; thy vile succumbency gives him the day and his will upon thee. He desires no more than that he may suppress in thee all heavenly desires, and keep thee thus a slave and a prisoner (confined in thy spirit to this low, dark dungeon) by thy own consent. While thou remainest without desire after heaven, he is secure of thee, as knowing then thou wilt take no other way, but what will bring thee, as unto the same eternal state with himself in the end. He is jealous over thee, that thou direct not a desire, nor glance an eye heaven-ward. While thou dost not so, thou art entirely subject, and givest as full obedience to him, as thy God requires to himself in order to thy blessedness. But is it a thing tolerable to thy thoughts, that thou shouldst yield that heart-obedience to the devil against God? And this being the state of thy case, what more significant expression canst thou make of the contempt of divine goodness? O the love that thou neglectest, while the most glorious issue and product of it is with thee an undesired thing! Yea, this the thing itself speaks, were

there no such competition. What, that when eternal love hath conceived, and is travelling to bring forth such a birth; that when it invites thee to an expectation of such glory shortly to be revealed, the result of so deep counsels and wonderful works, this should be the return from thee, I desire it not! Is this thy gratitude to the Father of glory, the requital of the kindness, yea, and of the blood of thy Redeemer? If this blessedness were not desirable for itself, methinks the offerer's hand should be a sufficient endearment. But thou canst not so divide or abstract, it consists in beholding and bearing his glorious likeness who invites thee to it; and therefore in the neglect of it thou most highly affrontest him.

Yea further, is it not a monstrous unnaturalness towards thyself, as well as impiety towards God, not to desire that perfect, final blessedness? Doth not every thing naturally tend to its ultimate perfection and proper end? What creature would not witness against thee, if thou neglect, in thine own capacity and kind, to aim at thine? Surely thou canst not allow thyself to think any thing beneath *this*, worthy to be owned by thee, under that notion, of thy highest good and thy last end. But that thy spirit should labour under an aversion towards thy highest good, towards thy blessedness itself, is not that a dismal token upon thee? If thou didst disaffect and nauseate the things in which thy present life is bound up, and without which thou canst not live, wouldst thou not think thy case deplorable? What dost thou think will become of thy soul, whose everlasting life is bound up in that very good which thou desirest not; which cannot live that life without that good, nor with it, if thou hast no desire to it? O the eternal resentments thy soul will have of this cruelty! to be withheld from that wherein its life lies! Wouldst thou not judge him unnatural that should kill his brother, assasinate his father, starve his child? What shall be said of him that destroys himself? How may that soul lament that ever it was thine; and say, O that I had rather been of any such lower kind, to have animated a fly, to have inspirited a vile worm, rather than to have served a reasonable beast, that by me knew the good it would never follow, and did not desire! But if thou hast any such desires, in a low degree, after this blessedness, as thou thinkest may entitle thee to the name thou bearest, of a saint, a christian; is it not still very unnatural to pursue a good; approved by thy stated judgment as best in itself, and for thee, with so unproportionable, so slothful desires? For the same reason thou dost desire it at all, thou shouldst desire it much; yea, and still more and more, till thou attain it, and be swallowed up into it. Thy best and last good thou canst never desire too much. And

let it be considered by thee, that the temper thou thinkest thyself innocent of, an habitual prevalent disaffection to the true blessedness of saints, may for ought thou knowest be upon thee; while it appears thou art so very near the borders of it; and it appears not with such certainty that thou partakest not in it. It is not so easy a matter, critically to distinguish and conclude of the lowest degree (in *hypothesi*, or with application to thy own case) of that desire which is necessary to qualify thee for the enjoyment of this blessedness. And is it not a matter both of shame and terror, that thou shouldst desire thy blessedness so faintly, as not to know whether thou truly desire it at all? It is true, that a certainty, amongst such as may be sincere, is very little common; but whence proceeds it, but from their too common, indulged sloth; out of which all this is designed to awaken thee. And the commonness whereof doth as little detract from the reproach and sinfulness, as from the danger of it. It is but a poor defence, for what is intrinsically evil in itself, that it is common.

But further, as the case is, this is so reproachful a thing, even in common estimate,—not to desire heaven and eternal glory, or to desire it with very cold and careless desires—that there are few will profess it, or own it to be their temper; much fewer that will undertake to excuse or justify it. It is so evilly thought of, that among merely sober and rational men, it can never find an advocate, or any that will afford it patronage. The generality pretend a desire of going to heaven and being with God. If any be so observant of themselves as to know, and so ingenuous as to confess it otherwise with them, they complain of it as their fault, and say, they would fain have it redressed but are far from assuming that confidence, to defend or plead for it. Consider then, wilt thou persist in such a temper and disposition of mind as all men condemn; and be guilty of so odious a thing, as shall be censured and blamed by the common concurrent vote and judgment of mankind? Thou wouldst be ashamed to stand forth and profess openly to men, that thou desirest an earthly felicity more than a blessedness in heaven; or at least, that thou art so indifferent, and the scales hang so even with thee, that thou canst hardly tell which way they incline most. And art thou not ashamed that this should be thy usual temper; how much soever thou conceal it from the notice and observation of the world? Moreover, how can it escape thy serious reflection, that if thou pretend it otherwise with thee, it is but to add one sin to another, and cover thy carnality with hypocrisy and dissimulation? Yea, while thou continuest in that temper of spirit, not to desire this blessedness as thy supreme end, the whole of thy religion is but an empty shew, an

artificial disguise it carries an appearance and pretence, as if thou wast aiming at God and glory, while thy heart is set another way, and the bent of thy soul secretly carries thee a counter-course. Hath not religion an aspect towards blessedness? What mean thy praying, thy hearing, thy sacramental communion, if thou have not a design for eternal glory? What makest thou in this way, if thou have not thy heart set towards this end?

Nor is it more dishonest and unjust, than it is foolish and absurd, that the disposition and tendency of thy soul should be directly contrary to the only design of the religion thou professest and dost externally practise. Thy profession and desires are nothing but self-contradiction. Thou art continually running counter to thyself; outwardly pursuing what thou inwardly declinest. Thy real end (which can be no other than what thou really desirest and settest thy heart upon) and thy visible way are quite contrary: so that while thou continuest the course of religion, in which thou art engaged, having taken down from before thine eyes the end which thou shouldst be aiming at, and which alone religion can aptly subserve, thy religion hath no design or end at all, none at least which thou wouldst not be ashamed to profess and own. Indeed this temper of heart I am now pleading against, an undesirousness or indifferency of spirit towards the eternal glory, renders religion the vainest thing in the world. For whereas all the other actions of our lives have their stated, proper ends, religion hath in this case none at all; none to which it hath any designation in this nature, or any aptness to subserve. This monstrous absurdity it infers, and how strange it is, that it should not be reflected on? That whereas if you ask any man of common understanding, what he doth this or that action for, especially if they be stated actions, done by him in an ordinary course, he can readily tell you, for such and such an end: but ask him why he continues any practice of religion, he cannot say (in this case) for what. For can any man imagine what other end religion naturally serves for, but to bring men to blessedness? Which being no other thing than what hath been here described; such as are found not to desire it really and supremely, as their end, can have no real attainable end of their being religious at all. To drive on a continued course and series of actions in a visible pursuit of that which they desire not, and have no mind to, is such a piece of folly, so fond and vain a trifling, that as I remember, Cicero reports Cato to have said concerning the sooth-sayers of his time, he did wonder they could look in one another's faces and not laugh, (being conscious to each other's impostures, and the vanity of their profession); so one would as justly wonder, that

the generality of carnal men, (who may shrewdly guess at the temper of one another's minds) do not laugh at each other, that they are jointly engaged in such exercises of religion, to the design whereof the common and agreed temper of their spirits do so little correspond. As if all were in very good earnest for heaven, when each one knows for himself, and may (possibly with more truth than charity) suppose of the rest, that if they might always continue in their earthly stations, they had rather never come there. And therefore that they desire it not supremely, and so not as their end at all; consider if then, that thy no-desire of this blessed state quite dispirits thy religion, utterly ravishes away its soul, leaves it a dead, foolish, vain thing, renders it an idle impertinency, not a mean to a valuable end. This desire is the life of religion; all duties and exercises of piety are without it, but empty formalities, solemn pieces of pageantry; every service done to God, but the sacrifice of a fool, if not animated by the desire of final blessedness in him, and be not part of our way thither, a means designed to the attainment of it; which nothing can be, that we are not put upon by the virtue of the desired end. Without this, religion is not itself. A continuance in well-doing, is as it were the body of it; and therein a seeking honour, glory, and immortality, the soul and spirit. The desire of a heavenly country must run the whole course of our earthly pilgrimage: it were otherwise a continued error, an uncertain wandering, no steady tending towards our end: so that thou art a mere vagrant, if this desire do not direct thy course towards thy Father's house. And methinks all this should make thee even ashamed of thyself, if thou canst not find this desire to have a settled residence, and a ruling power in thy soul. Then,

(2.) Sense of praise should signify something too, as the apostle, whatsoever things are—pure, lovely, &c. If there be any virtue,—any praise, think of these things. And hath not the eternal glory those characters upon it of purity and loveliness beyond all things? Is it not a laudable and praise worthy thing, to have a mind and heart set upon that? The blessed God puts a note of excellency upon this temper of spirit: but they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, &c. Heb. 11. 16. This renders them a people worthy of him who hath called them to his kingdom and glory; fit for him to own a relation to. 1 Thes. 2. 12. Had they been of low, terrene spirits, he would have accounted it a shame to him, to have gone under the name and cognizance of their God. But inasmuch as they desire the heavenly country, have learned to trample this terrestrial world, cannot be contained within this lower sphere, nor satisfy themselves

in earthly things; they now discover a certain excellency of spirit, in respect whereof, God is not ashamed to own a relation to them, before all the world to be called their God; to let men see what account he makes of such a spirit. Yea, this is the proper, genuine spirit and temper of a saint, which agrees to him as he is such. He is begotten to the eternal inheritance. A disposition (and therein a desire) to it is in his very nature, (the new nature he hath received,) implanted there from his original. He is born spirit of Spirit, and by that birth is not entitled only, but adapted and suited also to that pure and spiritual state of blessedness. That grace, by the appearance whereof men are made christians, teaches also, intructs to this very thing, to look for this blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: that which you know consummates that blessedness. For when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory; by the participation of the divine nature, their spirits escape and get up above this corrupt, impure world. That new nature is a holy flame that carries their hearts upwards towards heaven.

Further, such desires appear hence to be of divine original, an infusion from the blessed God himself. That nature is from him immediately in which they are implanted. The apostle speaking of his earnest, panting desire, to have mortality swallowed up of life, presently adds, he that wrought us to the self-same thing is God. 2 Cor. 5. 4. They are obedient desires; the soul's present answer to the heavenly call, (Heb. 3. 1.) by which God calls it to his kingdom and glory. This glory is (as hath been formerly noted) the very term of that calling. 1 Thes. 2. 12. The God of all grace hath called us unto his eternal glory, by Christ Jesus. 1 Pet. 5. 10. The glorified state is the mark, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. Phil. 3. 14. It is the matter of the apostle's thanksgiving unto God, on the behalf of the Thessalonians, that they were called by his gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thes. 2. 14. When the soul desires this glory, it obediently answers this call. This is a compliance and subjection of heart to it. How lovely and becoming a thing is this, when God touches the heart with a stamp and impress of glory, and it forthwith turns itself to that very point, and stands directly bent towards the state of glory; is not wayward or perverse, but herein yields itself to God, and complies with the divine pleasure. Such desires have much in them of a child-like ingenuity; to desire the sight of a father's face; when this is the intimate sense of the soul, Shew me the Father and it suffices To desire the fullest conformity to his nature and will, to be perfect as that heavenly Father is perfect, what doth better become a child? They

are generous desires; they aim at perfection, the highest that created nature is capable of; not contented to have had some glances of divine glory, some strokes and lines of his image, but aspiring to full-eyed visions, a perfect likeness. They are victorious desires; they (as it were) ride in triumph over the world and every sublunary thing; they must be supposed to have conquered sensual inclinations, to have got the mastery over terrene dispositions and affections. With what holy contempt and scorn of every earthly thing doth that lofty soul quit this dirty world and ascend, that is powerfully carried by its own desire towards that blessed state? The desire of such a knowledge of Christ, as might transform into his likeness, and pass the soul through all degrees of conformity to him, till it attain the resurrection of the dead, and become like a risen, glorified Jesus; such a desire I say, if it make all things seem as loss and dung in comparison, (even a formal, spiritless religion itself,) will it not render this world the most despicable dunghill of all the rest? Try such a soul if you can, tempt it down to enjoy a flattering, kind world, or to please it when angry and unkind. When desires after this glory are once awakened into an active, lively vigour, when the fire is kindled, and the flame ascends, and this refined spirit is joyfully ascending therein, see if you can draw it back, and make it believe this world a more regardable thing. Why should not all those considerations make thee in love with this blessed frame of spirit, and restless till thou find thyself uncapable of being satisfied with any thing but divine likeness?

6 That while we cannot as yet attain the mark and end of our desires, we yield not to a comfortless despondency in the way, but maintain in our hearts a lively joy, in the hope that hereafter we shall attain it. We are not all this while persuading to the desire and pursuit of an unattainable good. Spiritual desires are also rational, and do therefore involve hope with them; and that hope ought to infer and cherish joy. Hopeless desire is full of torment, and must needs banish joy from that breast which it hath got the possession of. It is a disconsolate thing, to desire what we must never expect to enjoy, and are utterly unlikely ever to compass. But these desires are part of the new creature, which is not of such a composition, as to have a principle of endless trouble and disquiet in itself. The Father of mercies is not so little merciful to his own child, to lay it under a necessity, from its very natural constitution, of being for ever miserable by the desire of that which it can never have. It had been very unlike the workmanship of God, to make a creature to which it should be necessary to desire, and impossible to enjoy the same thing. No: but as he hath given holy

souls, (as to the present case,) great incentives of desire, so doth he afford them proportionable encouragement of hope also; and that hope intervening, can very well reconcile desire and joy, and lodge them together in the same bosom. So that as it is a thing capable of no excuse, to hear of this blessedness and not desire it; so it would be, to desire and not expect it, to expect it, and not rejoice in it, even while we are under that expectation. And it must be a very raised joy that shall answer to the expectation of so great things. If one should give a stranger to Christianity an account of the christian hopes, and tell him what they expect to be and enjoy, before long; he would sure promise himself, to find so many angels dwelling in human flesh, and reckon, when he came among them he should be as amidst the heavenly quire; every one full of joy and praise. He would expect to find us living on earth, as the inhabitants of heaven, as so many pieces of immortal glory lately droped down from above, and shortly again returning thither. He would look to find, every-where in the Christian world, incarnate glory sparkling through the over-shadowing vail; and wonder how this earthly sphere should be able to contain so many great souls. But when he draws nearer to us, and observes the course and carriage of our lives, when he sees us walk as other men, and considers the strange disagreement of our daily conversation to our so great, avowed hopes, and how little sense of joy and pleasure we discover ourselves to conceive in them; would he not be ready to say, "Sure some or other (willing only to amuse the world with the noise of strange things) have composed a religion for these men, which they themselves understand nothing of. If they do adopt and own it for theirs, they understand not their own pretences; they are taught to speak some big words, or to give a faint or seeming assent to such as speak them in their names, but it is impossible they should be in good earnest, or believe themselves in what they say and profess." And what reply then should we be able to make? For who can think that any who acknowledge a God, and understand at all what that name imports, should value at so low a rate, as we visibly do, the eternal fruition of his glory, and a present sonship to him, the pledge of so great a hope. He that is born heir to great honours and possessions, though he be upon great uncertainties as to the enjoyment of them, (for how many interveniences may prevent him?) yet when he comes to understand his possibilites and expectancies, how big doth he look and speak? what grandeur doth he put on? His hopes form his spirit and deportment. But is it proportionably so with us? Do our hopes fill our hearts with joy, our mouths with praise, and clothe

our faces with a cheerful aspect, and make a holy alacrity appear in all our conversations?

But let not the design of this discourse be mistaken. It is not a presumptuous confidence I would encourage, nor a vain ostentation, nor a disdainful over-looking of others whom we fancy ourselves to excel. Such things hold no proportion with a Christian spirit. His is a modest, humble exultation; a serious, severe joy; suitable to his solid, stable hope. His spirit is not puffed up and swollen with air, it is not big by an inflation, or a light and windy tumor, but it is really filled with effectual pre-apprehensions of a weighty glory. His joy accordingly exerts itself with a steady, lively vigour, equally removed from vain lightness and stupidity, from conceitedness, and insensibleness of his blessed state. He forgets not that he is less than the least of God's mercies, but disowns not his title to the greatest of them. He abases himself to the dust, in the sense of his own vileness; but in the admiration of divine grace, he rises as high as heaven. In his humiliation, he affects to equal himself with worms, in his joy and praise, with angels. He is never unwilling to diminish himself, but afraid of detracting any thing from the love of God, or the issues of that love. But most of all he magnifies (as he hath cause) this its last and most perfect issue. And by how much he apprehends his own unworthiness, he is the more wrapt up into a wonderful joy, that such blessedness should be his designed portion. But now, how little do we find in ourselves of this blessed frame of spirit? How remote are we from it? Let us but inquire a little into our own souls: are there not too apparent symptoms with us of the little joy we take in the fore-thoughts of future blessedness? For,

(1.) How few thoughts have we of it? What any delight in, they remember often. It is said of the same person, that his delight is in the law of the Lord, and that in his law he doth meditate day and night. Psal. 1. 2. And when the Psalmist professes his own delight in God's statutes, he adds, I will not forget thy word. Psal. 119. 16. Should we not be as unapt to forget heaven, if our delight were there? But do not days pass with us, wherein we can allow ourselves no leisure to mind the eternal glory; when yet vanities throng in upon us, without any obstruction or check? And (what is consequent hereupon,) how seldom is this blessed state the subject of our discourse? How often do christians meet, and not a word of heaven? O heavy, carnal hearts! Our home and eternal blessedness in this, appears to be forgotten among us. How often may a person converse with us, before he understand our relation to the heavenly country? If exiles

meet in a foreign land, what pleasant discourse have they of home? They suffer not one another to forget it. Such was their remembrance of Sion, who sat together bemoaning themselves by the rivers of Babylon, a making mention of it, as the phrase is often used. And methinks (even as to this remembrance) it should be our own common resolution too; If we forget thee, O Jerusalem; if we forget to make mention of thee, O thou city of the living God; let our right hand forget her cunning; our tongue shall sooner cleave to the roof of our mouth; and so it would be, did we prefer that heavenly Jerusalem above our chief joy.

(2.) How little doth it weigh with us? It serves not to outweigh the smallest trouble; if we have not our carnal desire in every thing gratified, if any thing fall out cross to our inclinations, this glory goes for nothing with us. Our discontents swallow up our hopes and joys; and heaven is reckoned as a thing of nought. If when outward troubles afflict or threaten us, we could have the certain prospect of better days, that would sensibly revive and please us. Yea, can we not please ourselves with very uncertain groundless hopes of this kind, without promise or valuable reason? But to be told of a recompence at the resurrection of the just, of a day when we shall see the face of God, and be satisfied with his likeness; this is insipid and without savour to us, and affords us but cold comfort. The uncertain things of time, signify more with us, than the certain things of eternity. Can we think it is all this while well with us? Can we think this a tolerable evil, or suffer with patience such a distemper of spirit? Methinks it should make us even weary of ourselves, and solicitous for an effectual, speedy redress.

The redress must be more in our own doing, (striving with our souls and with God for them) than in what any man can say. Most of the considerations under that foregoing rule, are with little variation applicable to this present purpose. I shall here annex only some few subordinate directions; which may lead us into this blessed state of life, and give us some joyful fore-tastes of the future blessedness, according as our spirits shall comply with them. But expect not to be cured by prescriptions, without using them; or that heavenly joy can be the creature of mortal, unregarded breath; we can only prescribe means and methods through which God may be pleased to descend, and in which thou art diligently to insist and wait. And because I cannot well suppose thee ignorant, where much is said to this purpose; I shall therefore say little.

[1.] Possess thy soul with the apprehension, that thou art not at liberty in this matter? but that there is a certain spiritual delectation, which is incumbent on thee as indispensable duty.

Some, whose moroser tempers do more estrange them from delights, think themselves more especially concerned, to banish every thing of that kind from their religion, and fancy it only to consist in sour and righteous severities. Others seem to think it arbitrary and indifferent; or that, if they live in a continual sadness and dejection of spirit, it is only their infelicity, not their fault; and apprehend not the obligation that is upon them by a divine law, otherwise to manage and order their spirits. But what then, Are such words thought to be spoken at random, Her ways are ways of pleasantness. Prov. 3. 17. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance. Psal. 16. 5. The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, (or, in the midst of pleasantnesses, as the expression hath been noted to signify?) Do such precepts carry no sense with them; Delight thyself in the Lord. Psal 37. 4. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice; Phil. 4. 4. with many more? Do all passages of this kind in Scripture stand for cyphers, or were they put in them by chance? Is there such a thing as an aptitude to delectation in our natures; and doth the sanctification thereof entitle the joy of saints to a place among the fruits of the Spirit; (Gal. 5. 22.) and yet is the exercise of it to have no place in their hearts and practice? Do not think you are permitted so to extinguish or frustrate so considerable a principle of the divine life. Know, that the due exercise of it is a part of the order and discipline of God's family: that it is a constitution of the divine goodness and wisdom both to cherish his own, and invite in strangers to him. Yea, that is the scope and aim of the whole gospel revelation, that what is discovered to us of the word of life, was purposely written to draw souls unto fellowship with the Father and Son, that their joy might be full; (1 John 1. 4) that the ministers of this gospel are therefore stiled the helpers of their joy. 2. Cor. 1. 24. Therefore, though here it be not required nor allowed, that you should indulge a vain, trifling levity, or a sensual joy, or that you should rejoice you know not why, (imitating the laughter of a fool,) or inopportunely, when your state admits it not, or when the Lord calls to mourning; yet settle however this persuasion in your hearts, that the serious, rational, regular, seasonable exercise of delight and joy is matter of duty, to be charged upon conscience, from the authority of God; and is an integral part in the religion of christians. And then sure you will not think any object more proper and suitable for it to be exercised upon, than the foreseen state of blessedness, which is in itself a fulness of joy; (Psal. 16. 11) the joy of our Lord. Mat. 25. 21. And is, in the pre-apprehensions of it, a more considerable matter of joy than our

present state affords us besides; and without relation whereto we have no matter of rational joy at all.

[2.] Keep faith in exercise; both in that act of it which persuades the soul of the truth of the gospel revelation, and that act of it which unites it to God through the Mediator. The apostle prays on the behalf of his Roman christians, that they might be filled with joy and peace in believing; (Rom. 15. 13.) and we are told, how effectually (as to this) it supplied the place of sight. Such as had not seen Christ, (which was the privilege of many other christians of that time,) yet believing, did rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious. 1 Pet. 1. 8. Faith directly tends, in that double office before-mentioned, to excite and foment this joy. As it assents to the truth of the gospel revelation, it realizes the object, is the substance and evidence of the invisible glory. Heb. 11. 1. As it unites the soul with God through Christ, in a fiducial and obediential closure, it ascertains our interest therein, and is our actual acceptance of our blessedness itself; for when we take God through Christ to be our God, what is it, but to accept him as our eternal and satisfying portion, whom we are after fully to enjoy, in the vision and participation of his glorious excellencies and infinite fulness? Which two acts of faith we have mentioned together in one text,—they were persuaded of the promises, and embraced them; the former respecting the truth of the promises, the latter the goodness of the thing promised. And hereupon they confessed themselves (as it follows) pilgrims and strangers on earth; which abdication of the earth as none of their country, could not be, but that through their faith they had a joyous pre-apprehension of that better state. That confession did manifestly involve in it a lively joy, springing from the sight and embrace of that more taking, distant good which the promise presented them with; whence they could not think it enough, to be such to themselves in their own thoughts and the temper of their minds; but they cannot forbear (so overcoming were their sights and tastes) to give it out, to speak, and look, and live, as those that were carried up in their spirits above this earth, and who did even disdain to own themselves in any other relation to it, than that of foreigners and strangers.

Set thy faith on work, soul, and keep it a work, and thou wilt find this no riddle; it will be so with thee too; we have much talk of faith among us, and have the name often in our mouths, but how few are the real lively believers? Is it to be thought that such blessedness should not more affect our hearts; nay would it not ravish away our very souls, did we thoroughly believe it? And were it our present daily work, to renew the bonds of a vital union with the blessed God, in whom we expect to

be blessed for ever, could that be without previous gusts of pleasure? It is not talking of faith but living by it, that will give us the experience of heavenly delights and joys.

[3.] Take heed of going in thy practice against thy light; of persisting in a course of known or suspected sin, that states thee in a direct hostility and rebellion against heaven; and can never suffer thee to think of eternity and the other world with comfort; will fill thy mind with frightful apprehensions of God, render the sight of his face the most terrible thing to thy thoughts thou canst imagine; and satisfaction with his likeness the most impossible thing. Let a good understanding and correspondence, be continued between God and thee, (which is not possible, if thou disobeyest the dictates of thy conscience, and takest the liberty to do what thou judgest God hath forbidden thee) that this may be thy rejoicing; the testimony of a good conscience; that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not according to fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God thou hast had thy conversation. Take God for a witness of thy ways and walkings; approve thyself to his jealous eye; study to carry thyself acceptably towards him, and unto all well pleasing. Let that be thy ambition, to stand right in his thoughts, to appear gracious in his eyes. Hold fast thine integrity, that thy heart may not reproach thee as long as thou livest. If iniquity be in thy hand, put it away; then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot and without fear. Be a faithful subject of that kingdom of God, (and here conscience rules under him,) which consists first in righteousness, and then in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Thou wilt, so, daily behold the face of God in righteousness and with pleasure; but wilt most of all please thyself to think of thy final appearance before him, and the blessedness that shall ensue.

[4.] Watch and arm thyself against the too forcible strokes and impressions of sensible objects. Let not the savour of such low, vile things corrupt the palate of thy soul. A sensual, earthly mind and heart cannot taste heavenly delights; they that are after the flesh do savour the things of the flesh; they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. Labour, to be thoroughly mortified towards this world and the present state of things. Look upon this scene and pageant as passing away; (1 Cor. 7. 31. 1 John. 2. 17.) keep natural appetites under restraint, (the world and the lusts of it pass away together:) sensuality is an impure thing. Heavenly, refined joy cannot live amidst so much filth. Yea, and if thou give thy flesh liberty too far in things that are (in specie) lawful it will soon get advantage to domineer and keep thy soul in a depressing servitude. Abridge it then, and cut it short, that

thy mind may be enlarged and at liberty, may not be thronged and pre-possessed with carnal imaginations and affections. "Let thy soul" (if thou wilt take this instruction from a heathen, Max. Tyr. in dissert. τι ο θεοι κατα Πλατωνος: *on the nature of the gods according to Plato.)* " look with a constant erect mind into the undefiled light, neither darkened nor borne down towards the earth; but stopping its ears,and turning its eyes and all other senses back upon itself; and quite abolishing out of itself, all earthly sighs, and groans, and pleasures,and glories and honours and disgrace; and having forsaken all these, choose for the guides of its way, true reason and strong love, the one whereof will shew it the way, the other make it easy and pleasant."

[5.] Having voided thy mind of what is earthly and carnal, apply and turn it to this blessed theme. The most excellent and the vilest objects are alike to thee, while thou mindest them not. Thy thoughts possibly bring thee in nothing but vexation and trouble,which would bring in as soon joy and pleasure,didst thou turn them to proper objects. A thought of the heavenly glory is as soon thought as of an earthly cross. We complain the world troubles us; then what do we there? Why get we not up, in our spirits, into the quieter region? What trouble would the thoughts of future glory be to us? How are thoughts and wits set on work for this flesh? But we would have our souls flourish as the lillies, without any thing of their own care. Yea, we make them toil for torture, and not for joy, revolve an affliction a thousand times before and after it comes, and have never done with it, when eternal blessedness gains not a thought.

[6.] Plead earnestly with God for his Spirit. This is joy in the Holy Ghost; or whereof he is the author. Many christians (as they must be called) are such strangers to this work of imploring and calling in the blessed Spirit, as if they were capable of adopting these words, we have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost. That name is with them as an empty sound. How hardly are we convinced of our necessary dependance on that free Spirit, as to all our truly spiritual operations? This Spirit is the very earnest of our inheritance. The foretastes and first fruits we have here of the future blessedness, the joy and pleasure, the complacential relishes we have of it before-hand, are by the gracious vouchsafement and work of this blessed Spirit. The things that eye that hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man, are revealed by this Spirit. Therefore doth the apostle direct his prayer on the behalf of the Ephesians, to the Father of this glory that he would give this Spirit of wisdom and revelation,—to enlighten the eyes of their understanding, that they might know the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in (or

among) the saints. Eph. 1.18. And its revelation is such as begets an impression; in respect whereof, it is said also, to seal up to the day of redemption. Therefore pray earnestly for this Spirit; not in idle, dreaming words of course, but as being really apprehensive of the necessity of prevailing: and give not over till thou find that sacred fire diffusing itself through thy mind and heart, to enlighten the one and refine the other, and so prepossess both of this glory, that thy soul may be all turned into joy and praise. And then let me add here, (without the formality of a distinct head) that it concerns thee to take heed of quenching that Spirit, by either resisting or neglecting its holy dictates or, as the same precept is otherwise given, of grieving the Spirit: he is by name and office the Comforter. The primitive christians, it is said, walked in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Is it equal dealing, to grieve him whose business it is to comfort thee? Or canst thou expect joy where thou causest grief? Walk in the Spirit; adore its power. Let thy soul do it homage within thee. Wait for its holy influences, and yield thyself to its ducture and guidance; so wilt thou go as the redeemed of the Lord, with everlasting joy upon thy head till thou enter that presence, where is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

Nor do thou think it improper or strange, that thou shouldst be called upon to rejoice in what thou dost not yet possess. Thy hope is instead of fruition; it is an anticipated enjoyment. We are commanded to rejoice in hope; (Rom. 12. 12.) and saints have professed to do so, to rejoice even in the hope of the glory of God. Rom. 5. 2. Nor is it unreasonable that should be thy present highest joy. For though yet it be a distant thing, and indistinctly revealed, the excellency of the object makes compensation for both, with an abundant surplusage. As any one would much more rejoice to be assured by a great person, of ample possessions he would make him his heir to, (though he knew not distinctly what they should be,) than to see a shilling, already his own, with his own eyes.

CHAP. XX.

The addition of two rules, that more specially respect the yet future season of this blessedness, after this life; namely, Rule 7. That we patiently wait for it until death. Rule 8. That we love not too much this present life.

THERE are yet two more rules to be superadded, that respect the season of this blessedness,—when we awake,—that is, not till we go out of time into eternity, not till we pass out of the drowsy darkness of our present state, till the night be over with us, and the vigorous light of the everlasting day do shine upon us. Hence therefore it will be further necessary:

7. That while the appointed proper season of this blessedness is not yet come, (that is, till God shall vouchsafe to translate us from our present earthly state,) we compose our spirits to a patient expectation of it. Upon a twofold account, the exercise of patience is very requisite in the present case, namely, both in respect of this every expectation itself, and also in respect of the concomitant miseries of this expecting state. In the *former* respect, an *absent* good is the matter of our *patience;* in the *latter*, *present* and *incumbent* evil. It falls more directly in our way, to speak to the exercise of *patience* upon the former account; yet as to the latter, (though it be more collateral as to our present purpose,) it cannot be unseasonable briefly to consider that also.

(1.) Therefore, The very expectation itself of this blessedness, renders patience very requisite to our present state. Patience hath as proper and necessary an exercise in expecting the good we want and desire, as in enduring the evil that is actually upon us. The direction (it must be remembered) intends such only as apprehend and desire this blessedness as their greatest good, whose souls are transported with earnest longings fully to enjoy what they have foretasted. I am apprehensive enough, that others need it not. There is no use of patience in expecting what we desire not. But as to those who desire it most, and who therefore are most concerned in this advice,

it may possibly become a doubt, how since there is sin in our present ignorance of God and unlikeness to him, this can be the matter of any patience. We must therefore know, that as our knowledge of God, and conformity to him, are both our duty and blessedness, the matter both of our endeavour and of God's vouchsafement; so our ignorance of him, and unlikeness to him, are both our sin and our misery; which, misery though God hath graciously removed it in part, yet also he continues it upon us in part, (as our sad experience tells us,) by his just and wise dispensation, which we cannot except against. Now therefore, looking upon the defect of our knowledge of God and likeness to him, under the former notion, though we are to reflect upon ourselves with great displeasure and indignation; yet looking on them in the latter notion, we are to submit to the righteous dispensation of God with a meek, unrepining patience. By this patience, therefore, I mean not a stupid succumbency under the remaining disease and distemper of our spirits, in this our present state; a senseless indifferency and oscitant cessation from continual endeavours of further redress; but a silent and submissive veneration of divine wisdom, and justice, and goodness, that are sweetly complicated in this proceedure with us, with a quiet, peaceful expectation of the blessed issue of it. This being premised, I shall briefly shew,—that we have need of patitience, and—that we have reason for it in this present case.

[1.] That we have need of it, (supposing our souls are intent upon glory, that we are in earnest in this pursuit) will appear upon sundry accounts.

First, The greatness of the thing we expect. To behold the face of God, to be satisfied with his likeness. What serious heart, apprehensive of its own concerns, can without much patience hold out under such an expectation? How do lovers that expect the marriage day, tell the hours, and chide the sun that it makes no more haste? But how can that soul contain itself, that expects the most intimate fruition of the Lord of glory.

Secondly. Consider the continual representation and frequent inculcations of this glory. Its vigorous, powerful beams are, by often repeated pulsations, continually beating upon such souls as are intent towards it. Life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel; and they are obliged by command and inclination to attend its discoveries. The eye that is once smitten, looks again and again, it is not satisfied with seeing; and every renewed look meets with, still, fresh rays of glory; they have frequent foretastes and prelibations, which still give life to new desires. To lie under the direct stroke of the powers of the world to come, this requires much patience, to sustain the burden of

such an expectation. Life itself were otherwise a bitter and a wearisome thing. * And the want of such foretastes (for alas they are not constant) makes desire sometimes more restless, and expectation more bitter and grievous.

Thirdly. Consider the nature and spring of these desires, that work in heavenly souls towards this glory. They are of a divine nature and original; He that hath wrought us to this self-same thing is God, 2 Cor. 5. 5. Observe the tenour of this proposition; God is not the subject of predication, but the predicate. The action is not predicated of God, as it would in this form of words, God hath wrought us, &c. but God is predicated of this agent, as if he had said, this is the work of a Deity; none but God could be the author of such desires. That a soul should be acted towards glory by the alone power of an almighty hand! here needs a divine patience to sustain it, and make it strong and able to endure such a motion, where there is divine power to act and move it forward. The frame could not hold else, it must dissolve. The apostle therefore praying for the Thessalonians, that God would direct their hearts into the love of of himself, (which could not but enflame their souls with a desire of a perfect vision and enjoyment,) presently adds, and into the patient waiting for Christ. 2 Thes. 3. 5. Where we cannot by the way but reflect upon the admirable constitution and equal temper of the new creature, as to the principles that are ingredient into the composition of it, fervent desires, allayed with meek submission, mighty love, with strong patience. If we consider it in *actu signato*, or in its *abstract idea*, this is its temperament; and of these there is a gradual participation, wherever you find it actually existing. God had otherwise formed a creature (the prime of his creatures) so as by its most intrinsical constituent principles to be a torment to itself.

Fourthly. The tiresome nature of expectation in itself, is not least considerable. It carries (it is true) pleasure (if it be hoping expectation) with it; but not without a great admixture of pain. It brings a kind of torture to the mind, as a continued exertion or stretching forth of the neck (by which it is ex-

* Canerem tibi angelica voce thronorum; quam mirifica, semper in patria dulcedine repleamur; nisi vererer, ne forte, posthac, tantæ dulcedinis hujus comparatione, tota tibi in terris vita non solum amarissima, verum etiam amaritudo ipso penitus videatur; I would sing to thee in the voice of the angelic choirs; we would ever indulge the most extatic delight in our country; were it not to be feared lest from the contrast of such sweetness, the whole of this life on earth should afterwards seem to thee not only exceedingly bitter, but even bitterness itself. M. Ficin. Epis.

pressed) doth to the body. Therefore it is most significantly said by the wise man, Hope deferred makes the heart sick. Prov. 13. 12. All these, I say, together discover the truth of what the apostle tells us, We have need of patience, that when we, &c. we may inherit the promise. Heb. 10. 26.

[2.] And as we have need of it, so we have also reason for it, upon many accounts. It is no piece of rigorous severity to be put upon the exercise of some patience, to be kept awhile in a waiting posture for the completion of this blessedness. For,

First, The thing you expect is sure. You have not to do in this matter with one who is inconstant, or likely to change. If such a one should make us large promises, we should have some cause never to think ourselves secure, till we had them made good to us. But since we live in the hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie (Tit. 1. 2.) and who, we know, is faithful, hath promised, (Heb. 10. 23.) we may be confident, and this confidence should quiet our hearts. What a faithful friend keeps for us, we reckon as safe in his hands, as in our own. He that believes, makes not haste. And impatient haste argues an unbelieving jealousy and distrust. Surely, there is an end, and thy expectation will not be cut off.

Secondly. It is a happiness that will recompence the most wearisome expectation. It were good sometimes to consider with ourselves, What is the object of our hope? are our expectations pitched upon a valuable good, that will be worth while to expect? so the Psalmist, What wait I for? and he answers himself, my hope is in thee. Psal. 39. 7. Sure then that hope will not make ashamed. It were a confounding thing to have been a long time full of great hopes that at last dwindle into some petite trifle, but when we know before-hand the business is such as will defray itself, bear its own charges, who would not be contented to wait?

Thirdly. Nor will the time of expectation be long—when I shall awake—when he shall appear. Put it to the longest term, it was said, sixteen hundred years ago, to be but a little while; three times over in the shutting up of the Bible he tells us, I come quickly. He seems to foresee he should be something impatiently expected: and at last, Surely I come quickly, as if he had said, What, will you not believe me? Be patient, saith the apostle, to the coming of the Lord: and presently he adds, be patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. James 5. 8.

Fourthly. Yea, and amidst the many troubles of that short time of expectation many present comforts are intermixed. Heaven is open to us. We have constant liberty of access to God. He disdains not our present converse. We may have

the constant pleasure of the exercise of grace, the heavenly delights of meditation, the joy of the public solemnities of worship, the communion and encouragement of fellow christians, the light of that countenance whereof we expect the eternal vision, the comforts of the Holy Ghost, the continual prospect of glory all the way thither. What cause have we of impatience or complaint?

Fifthly. Saints of all ages have had their expecting time. We are required to be followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises. Our Saviour himself waited a life's time for his glorification. I have (saith he) glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do! And now, Father, glorify me with thine own self, &c.

Sixthly. And while we are waiting, if it be not our fault, our glory will be increasing. We may be glorifying God in the mean time, which is the end of our beings; we need not live here to no purpose.

Seventhly. We were well enough content, till God more clearly revealed that other state, to live always as we do. It is not now ingenuous to be impatiently querulous about the time of our entering into it. It is his free vouchsafement; we never merited such a thing at his hands. It is not commendable among men, to be overquick in exacting debts even where there was an antecedent right, much less where the right only shall accrue by promise, not yet sueable; would it not shame us to have God say to us, Have patience with me, and I will pay you all? And our former state should be often reflected on. If you had promised great things to a wretch lately taken off the dunghill, and he is every day impatiently urging you to an untimely accomplishment, would you not check his over-bold haste, by minding him of his original? It becomes not base and lowborn persons to be transported with a preposterous, overhasty expectation of high and great things. And if God bear with the sinfulness of our present state, is it not reasonable we should bear with the infelicity of it to his appointed time? Besides that, we should much injure ourselves by our impatiency; imbitter our present condition, increase our own burden, dissipate our strength, retard our progress towards the perfection we profess to aim at; for patience must have its perfect work, that we may be perfect. Jam. 1. 4.

And others, that have had as clear apprehensions and vigorous desires (at least) of the future state of glory as we can, with modesty pretend to, have yet herein moderated themselves so, as to intend their present work with composed spirits. Take that one instance of the blessed apostle, who, whilst in this

earthly tabernacle he groaned, being burdened to be clothed with glory, and to have mortality swallowed up of life, being sensible enough, that during his abode or presence in the body, he was absent from the Lord; yet notwithstanding the fervour and vehemency of these longings, with the greatest calmness and resignation imaginable, as to the termination or continuance of his present state, he adds, that though he had rather be absent from the body, to be present with the Lord, it was yet his chief ambition (as the word Φιλοτιμεμεθα he uses signifies) whether present or absent (as if in comparison of that, to be present or absent were indifferent, though otherwise out of that comparison, he had told us, he would be absent rather) to be ευαρεστοι, accepted, to appear grateful and well-pleasing in the eye of God; such that he might delight and take content in, as his expression imports. As if he had said, though I am not unapprehensive of the state of my case, I know well, I am kept out of a far more desirable condition, while I remain in this tabernacle; yet, may I but please and appear acceptable in the sight of God, whether I be sooner dismissed from this thraldom, or longer continued in it, I contend not. His burden here, that so sensibly pressed him, was not a present evil so much as an absent good. He was not so burdened by what he felt and could not remove, as by what he saw and could not enjoy. His groans accordingly were not brutal, as those of a beast under a too heavy load; but rational, the groans of an apprehensive spirit panting after an alluring, inviting glory, which he had got the prospect of but could not yet attain. And hence the same spiritual reason which did exercise, did also, at once, moderate his desires; so that, as he saw there was reason to desire, so he saw there was reason his desires should be allayed by a submissive, ingenuous patience, till they might have a due and seasonable accomplishment. And that same temper of mind we find in him, when he professes to be in a strait between two, having a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, (Phil.. 1. 23.) which he thought to be far better, and yet apprehended his longer abode in the world to be needful for the service of the church; whereupon he expresses his confidence, that he should abide longer, and therein discovers how well contented he was, it should be so. Therefore, as in reference to this very expectation itself, there is great need of patience; so the exercise of it in this case hath nothing harsh or unreasonable in it, or which the spirit of a saint may not well comport with.

(2.) And for the exercise of patience upon the latter account; the concomitant miseries of this our present expecting state: I need not insist to shew how needful it is, this being that which our own sense will sufficiently instruct us in. We are not to

expect the future state of blessedness in a state of present ease and rest, in a quiet, friendly world, in a calm and peaceful region, under placid and benign influences from men and times; but amidst storms, and tempests, and troubles on every side, under frowns and displeasures, threats and dangers, harsh and rough severities, ill and ungentle usages, flouts and scorns, wrongs and injurious dealings, wants and pressures in many kinds. When the world is once forsaken by us, it grows angry; if we disclaim it, and avow ourselves not to be of it, become confessed strangers and pilgrims in it, set ourselves seriously and visibly to mind and design something above and beyond it, discover ourselves to be of them that are called out of it; from the same principle that it loves its own, it will hate us; when once God calls us his sons, the world will not know us. 1 Joh. 3. 1. We see in this context we are discoursing from, what the Psalmist's condition was, whilst as yet he remained under this blessed expectation; he found the men of time, whose portion was in this life, to be deadly enemies, wicked oppressors, proud insulters; they were to him as greedy lions, as a blood-thirsty sword. His cries to be delivered from them, shew what he met with at their hands, or thought he had reason to fear. Nor can so raging enmity and hate, ever cease to meditate mischiefs and cruelties. The same principle still remains in all the serpent's brood, and will still be putting forth itself in suitable practices, which cannot but infer to the contrary seed continual trouble and matter of complaint.

And, in short, whatever is here the matter of your complaint, ought to be the matter of your patience. Whence it cannot be doubted the matter of it will be very copious; so as to require the *all* of patience (as the apostle speaks;) which his addressing this solemn request to God on the behalf of these Colossian christians plainly intimates. He prays that they may be strengthened with all might according to the glorious power of God unto *all* patience, &c. Col. 1.11. Patience is the christian's suffering power, it is passive fortitude, an ability to suffer; and so apprehensive he is of their great need of a full and ample supply of this power, that he prays that they might be strengthened in this kind with might, with all might; that they might be even almighty sufferers; strengthened with a might according and corresponding to the glorious power of God himself; such as might appear the proper impress and image of divine power, whereof the divine power might be both the principle and the pattern (for the patience whereby God bears the wrongs done to him is called the power too; Let the power of the Lord be great as thou hast spoken, saying, the Lord is long-suffering, forgiving, &c.) And this *unto all patience,* where patience is put for an act of this

power, or must be understood of patience in exercise, actual bearing. Nor are we to look upon the expressions of this prayer as so many hyperbolical strains, or rhetorical schemes of speech. He prays according to the apprehension he had of the necessity of suffering christians.

And yet how much soever the need is, the reason is not less, it is a thing as possible as it is necessary; yea, there is more in the power of the cause, than to work this single effect. I mean it not only of the efficient cause mentioned before, but of the objective or final (as having such a superabundant sufficiency in its kind also) hinted in the close of the following verse. He doth not utter vain and groundless wishes, when he prays, that to that all of patience they might add joyfulness too, and giving of thanks; no, the matter (as if he had said) will bear it, even the inheritance of the saints in light, the very expectation objective, I am speaking of. It hath enough in it to induce, not only patience, but joy, not a contented bearing only, but giving of thanks too, to him that hath made you meet for that inheritance. ver. 12. True it is indeed, that the very need we have of patience, and the gain that would accrue by it, is itself a reason, why we should labour to frame our spirits to it: for if such evils must be undergone, how much better is it to bear them alone, than to have the disease of a wounded, impatient spirit, to bear also as an additional burden. The *law* of patience is certainly a most indulgent, merciful law, a gracious provision (as much as can be made by a law) for the quiet and ease of our spirits, under the sharpest and most afflictive sufferings. As might at large be shewn, were it suitable to fall into discourse of patience in itself considered; and to treat of that rest and pleasure, that liberty of spirit, that possession and dominion of one's own soul, which it carries in it: but that were too much a digression. It only falls directly here in our way to consider, that as we have many grievances and pressures to undergo, while we are expecting the future blessedness, which render the exercise of patience very requisite, so that there is enough of weight and worth in that very expectation, (that is in what we expect) to outweigh them all, and to render the exercise thereof highly reasonable upon that account. I reckon (saith the apostle) that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Rom. 8. 18. Thus (saith he) I reckon, that is, It is my stated, settled judgment, not a sudden, rash thought. When I have reasoned the matter with myself, weighed it well, considered the case, turned it round, viewed it exactly on every side, balanced advantages and disadvantages, pondered all things which are fit to come into consideration about it, this is the result,

the final determination, that which I conclude and judge at last,(judgment is the last product and issue of the most exquisite inquiry and debate, the ultimate and most perfect act of reason,) that the sufferings of this now of time are of no value ; things not fit, as it were, to be mentioned the same day with the glory to be revealed, &c. It can therefore be no *hard law*, no unreasonable imposition, that shall oblige us to the exercise of *patience*, under such sufferings, in the expectation of so transscendent glory. For, consider,—These sufferings are but from men, (for the sufferings of which the apostle here speaks, are such as wherein we suffer together with Christ, that is for his name and interest, on behalf of the Christian cause :) but this glory is from God. How disproportionable must the effects be of a created and increated cause.—Again, these sufferings reach no further than the bone and flesh. (fear not them that kill the body, and after they have done that, can do no more, &c.) but this glory reaches unto, and transforms the soul. How little can a clod of earth suffer, in comparison of what an immortal spirit may enjoy? And further, there is much mixture in our present sufferings; the present state of suffering saints is not a state of total misery; there are, as it were, rays of glory interlaced with their present afflictions: but there will be nothing of affliction mingled with their future glory.

Yea, and (what may not only convince, but even transport us too (these sufferings are but temporary, nay but momentary, this glory eternal. What heart is big enough to comprehend the full sense of these words,Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. 2 Cor. 4. 17. How might I dwell here upon every syllable, light affliction, weighty glory, *exceeding weight;* affliction for a moment, eternal weight of glory! O then, how unworthy is it of the Christian name and hopes, that we should have an impatient resentment of this method God follows with us, (as he did with our great Redeemer and Lord) that we should suffer first, and then enter into glory! Heaven were a poor heaven, if it would not make us savers. It were high time for us to give over the Christian profession, if we do not really account, that its reward and hope do surmount its reproach and trouble; or do think its cross more weighty than its crown. Is the price and worth of eternal glory fallen? It hath been counted worth suffering for. There have been those in the world that would not accept deliverance from these sufferings, that they might obtain the better resurrection. Are we grown wiser? Or would we indeed wish God should turn the tables, and assign us our good things here, and hereafter evil

things? Ungrateful souls! How severe should we be to ourselves, that we should be so apt to complain for what we should admire and give thanks! What, because purer and more refined Christianity in our time and in this part of the world hath had public favour and countenance, can we therefore not tell how to frame our minds to the thoughts of sufferings? Are tribulation and patience antiquated names, quite out of date and use with us, and more ungrateful to our ears and hearts, than heaven and eternal glory are acceptable? And had we rather (if we were in danger of suffering on the Christian account) run a hazard as to the latter, than adventure on the former? Or do we think it impossible we should ever come to the trial, or be concerned to busy ourselves with such thoughts? Is the world become so stable and so unacquainted with vicissitudes, that a state of things less favourable to our profession can never revolve upon us? It were, however, not unuseful to put such a case by way of supposition to ourselves. For every sincere christian is in affection and preparation of his mind a martyr. He that loves not Christ better than his own life, cannot be his disciple. We should at least inure our thoughts more to a suffering state, that we may thence take some occasion to reflect and judge of the temper of our hearts towards the name and cause of Christ. It is easy suffering indeed, in idea and contemplation; but something may be collected from the observation, how we can relish and comport with such thoughts. It is as training in order to fight; which is done often upon a very remote supposition, that such occasions may possibly fall out.

Therefore, What now do we think of it if our way into the kingdom of God shall be through many tribulations? If, before we behold the smiles of his blessed face, we must be entertained with the less pleasing sight of the frowning aspect and visage of an angry world? If we first bear the image of a crucified Christ, before we partake of the likeness of a glorious God? What, do we regret the thoughts of it? Do we account we shall be ill dealt with, and have a hard bargain of it? O how tender are we grown, in comparison of the hardiness and magnanimity of primitive christians! we have not the patience to think of what they had the patience to endure. We should not yet forget ourselves, that such a thing belongs to our profession, even in this way to testify our fidelity to Christ, and our value of the inheritance purchased by his blood, if he call us thereunto. We must know it is a thing inserted into the religion of christians, and (with respect to their condition in this world) made an essential thereto. He cannot be a christian, that doth not deny himself and take up the cross. How often when the active part of a christian's duty is spoken of, is the

passive part studiously and expressly annexed? Let us run *with patience* the race that is set before us. Heb. 12. 1. The good ground brought forth fruit, *with patience*, Matt. 13. eternal life is for them that by *a patient* continuance in well-doing seek after it. Rom. 2. 7. Yea, and hence the word of Christ is called the word of his *patience*. Rev. 3. chap. 1. And the stile wherein the beloved disciple speaks of himself, and his profession is this, I John, a companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ. Do we mean to plead prescription against all this? or have we got an express exemption? Have we a discharge to shew, a manumission from all the suffering part of a christian's duty? and is it not a discharge also from being christians as much? Will we disavow ourselves to belong to that noble society of them that through faith and patience inherit the promises? Surely we are highly conceited of ourselves, if we think we are too good to be numbered among them of whom the world was not worthy. Or we design to ourselves a long abode here, while we so much value the world's favour, and a freedom from worldly trouble: or eternity is with us an empty sound, and the future blessedness of saints an airy thing, that we should reckon it insufficient to counterpoise the sufferings of a few hasty days that will so soon have an end. It is a sad symptom of the declining state of religion, when the powers of the world to come are so overmastered by the powers of this present world, and objects of sense so much out-weigh those of faith. And is not this apparently the case with the christians of the present age? Do not your thoughts run the same course with theirs, that meditated nothing but sitting on the right and left hand of Christ, in an earthly dominion, while they never dreamed of drinking of his cup, or being baptized with his baptism? How many vain dreamers have we of golden mountains, and (I know not what) earthly felicity; whose pretended prophecies about (a supposed) near approaching prosperity to the church on earth, gain easier belief, or are more savoury and taking with too many, than all that the sacred oracles discover about its glorious state in heaven? Hence are our shoulders so unfitted to Christ's yoke (like the unaccustomed heifer,) and the business of suffering will not enter into our hearts. Methinks the belief and expectation of such a state hereafter, should make us even regardless of what we see or suffer here; and render the good or evil things of of time as indifferent to us. Yet neither plead I for an absolute stoical apathy, but for patience. A great follower of that sect acknowledges, "It is not a virtue to bear what we feel not, or have no sense of. Stupidity under providence is not a christian temper;" as that moralist says of the wise man, "It is not the

hardness of stone or iron that is to be ascribed to him. Sen. de Constant. sapientis. But lest any should run into that more dangerous mistake, to think, that by the patience we have been all this while persuading to (in the expectation of the blessedness yet to come) is meant a love of this present world, and a complacential adherence of heart to the earth, (which extreme the terrene temper of many souls may much incline them to;) it will be necessary upon that account to add (in reference also to the yet future expected season of this blessedness) this further and concluding instruction, namely

8. That (however we are not to repine at our being held so long in this world in an expecting state, yet) we let not our souls cleave too close to their terrestrial stations, nor be too much in love with the body, and this present low state of life on earth. For evident it is, that notwithstanding all the miseries of this expecting state, the most are yet loth to leave the world, and have hearts sordidly hankering after present things. And surely there is much difference between being *patient* of an abode on earth, and being *fond* of it. Therefore since the true blessedness of saints consists in such things as we have shewn, and cannot be enjoyed till we awake, not within the compass of time and this lower world; it will be very requisite to insist here awhile in the prosecution of this last rule. And what I shall say to it shall be by way of caution, and enforcement.

(1.) For caution: that we misapprehend not that temper and disposition of spirit, we are in this thing to endeavour and aim at. And it especially concerns us to be cautious about the inducements, and degree, of that desire of leaving this world, or contempt of this present life, which we either aspire to, or allow ourselves in.

[1] Inducements .Some are desirous, others at least content, to quit the world upon very insufficient, or indeed wicked considerations.

First. There are, who desire it merely to be out of the way of present troubles, whereof they have either too impatient a sense, or an unworthy and impotent fear. Many times the urgency and anguish of incumbent trouble impresses such a sense, and utters itself in such language as that, Now, O Lord, take I beseech thee my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live. Jonah 4. 3. Or, that, My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life: makes men long for death, and dig for it as for hid treasure; rejoice and be exceeding glad when they can find the grave, Job. 7. 15.

Yea, and the very fear of troubles that are but impendent and threatening, makes some wish the grave a sanctuary, and renders the clods of the valley sweet unto their thoughts. They

lay possibly so humoursome and fanciful stress upon the mere circumstances of dying, that they are earnest to die out of hand to avoid dying so and so; as the poet would fain persuade himself it was not *Demite naufragium, mors nihi munus erit, Death he feared, but shipwreck: it would not trouble them to die, but to die by a violent hand*, (Ovid.) or to be made a public spectacle; they cannot endure the thoughts of dying so. Here is nothing commendable or worthy of a christian in all this. It were a piece of christian bravery to dare to live in such a case, even when there is a visible likelihood of dying a sacrifice in the midst of flames. How much this glory was affected in the earlier days of Christianity is sufficiently known: though, I confess there were excesses in that kind, altogether unimitable. But if God call a man forth to be his champion and witness, to lay down a life, in itself little desirable, in a truly worthy cause, the call of his providence should be as the sound of the trumpet to a truly martial spirit; it should fill his soul with a joyful courage and sense of honour, and be complied with cheerfully, with that apprehension and resentment a stout soldier would have of his general's putting him upon some very hazardous piece of service, namely, he would say, (as the moralist expresses his sense for him) *Imperator de me non male meruit, sed bene judicavit, my general hath not deserved ill of me, but it appears he judged well.* Sen. It should be counted all joy to fall into such trials; Jam. 1. 2. that is, when they become our lot by a providential disposition, not by a rash precipitation of ourselves. And as it is a wickedness inconsistent with Christianity, to be of that habitual temper, to choose to desert such a cause for the saving of life; so it is a weakness very reproachful to it, to lay down one's life in such a case with regret, as unwilling in this kind to glorify him who laid down his for us. We are no more to die to ourselves, than to live to ourselves. Our Lord Jesus hath purchased to himself a dominion over both states, of the living and dead, and whether we live we must live to him, or die, we must die to him. Rom. 14. 8. It is the glory of a christian to live so much above the world, that nothing in it may make him either fond of life, or weary of it.

Secondly. There are others who are (at least) indifferent and careless how soon they die, out of either a worse than paganish infidelity, disbelieving the concernments of another world; or a brutish stupidity, not apprehending them; or a gross conceited ignorance, misunderstanding the terms of the gospel, and thinking themselves to be in a good condition, as to eternity, when the case is much otherwise with them. Take heed thy willingness to die be from no such inducements, but a mere desire of being with God, and of attaining this perfection and

blessedness, which he hath engaged thee in the pursuit and expectation of, And then, having made sure it be right as to the rise and principle,

[2.] Be careful it be not undue in point of degree; that is, a cold intermittent velleity is too little on the one hand, and a peremptory, precipitant hastiness is too much on the other. The middle and desirable temper here is a complacential submission to the divine will in that affair, with a preponderating inclination on our part, towards our eternal home, if the Lord see good. For we have two things to attend in this business, and by which our spirits may be swayed this way or that, that is the goodness of the object to be chosen, and the will of God which must guide and over-rule our choice; the former whereof we are permitted to eye in subordination to the latter and not otherwise. Now our apprehension of the desirableness and intrinsic goodness of the object ought to be such, (we are infidels else, if we have not that account of it,) that nothing we can eye under the notion of a good to us, may be reckoned so eligible as that, namely, our final and complete blessedness in the other world; which because we know we cannot enjoy without dying, death also must be judged more eligible than life, that is, our blessedness must be judged eligible for itself, and death as requisite to make it present. So that the entire object we are discoursing of being present blessedness, consider it in comparison with any thing else, that can be looked upon by us as a good which we ourselves are to enjoy, it ought to be preferred and chosen out of hand, inasmuch as nothing can be so great a present good to us, as that. And this ought to be the proper habitual inclination of our spirits, their constant frame and bent, as they respect only our interest and welfare. But considering God's dominion over us, and interest in our lives and beings, and that as well ingenuity as necessity binds us to be subject to his pleasure, we should herein patiently suffer ourselves to be over-ruled thereby, and not so abstractly mind our own interest and contentment in this matter, as if we were altogether our own, and had no Lord over us. Plato (In Phœd. Vid. et Plotin.) who abounds in discourses of the desirableness of dying, and of the blessed change it makes with them, that are good, yet hath this apt expression of the subjection we ought to be in to the divine pleasure as to this matter, περι εξαγωγης. Enead. 1. "That the soul is in the body as soldiers in a garrison, from whence they may not withdraw themselves without his order and direction who placed them there: and expostulates thus, "If (saith he) a slave of yours should destroy his own life without your consent, would you not be displeased; and if there had been any place left for revenge, been apt enough for

that too? So he brings in Socrates discoursing; and discovers himself herein to have had more light in this matter, touching that subordinate interest only men have in their own lives, and the unlawfulness of self-murder, (as he had in other things too,) than most heathens of the more refined sect ever arrived to.

If therefore God would give us leave to die, we should upon our own account be much more inclined to choose it; but, while he thinks fit to have it deferred, should yield to his will with an unrepining submission. Only it ought not to rest at all on our part, or that as to ourselves we find any thing more grateful to us in this world, that we are willing to stay a day longer in it. That for our own sakes we should affect a continuance here, would argue a terrene, sordid spirit. But then such should be our dutiful filial love to the Father of our spirits, that in pure devotedness to his interests, we would be content to dwell (if he would have it so) a Methuselah's age in an earthly tabernacle for his service: that is, that we may help to preserve his memorial in a lapsed world, (over-run with atheism and ignorance of its Maker,) and win him hearts and love (to our uttermost) among his apostate, disloyal creatures; and in our capacities be helpful to the encouragement of such as he continues in the world for the same purposes. This is the very temper the apostle expresses when in that strait. Phil. 1. 23. Which way the poise of his own spirits inclined him, in the consideration of his own interest, and what was simply more eligible to him, he expresses with high emphasis; To be with Christ, saith he, is more, more desirable to be, (for there are two comparatives in the greek text,) and therefore he professes his own desire in order thereto, to be dissolved; but that private desire was not so peremptory and absolute, but he could make it yield and give place to his duty towards God and his church, as it follows. So we know it is possible, that respects to a friend may over-sway a man's own particular inclination; and the inclination remain notwithstanding, but is subdued only; otherwise, had any reason or argument that did respect myself persuaded me to change it, I should then follow but my own proper inclination still, and so my friend hath nothing to thank me for.

So it ought to be with us here. Our inclination should preponderate towards a present change of our state; only our devotedness to his interest and pleasure, whose we are, should easily over-rule it. This is the lovely temper of a gracious spirit, as to this thing, that to die might be our choice, and to live in the mean time submitted to as our duty. As an ingenuous son whom his father hath employed abroad in a foreign country, though duty did bind him cheerfully therein to comply with

his father's will, and the necessity of his affairs; yet, when his father shall signify to him, that now he understands no necessity of his longer continuance there, and therefore he may if he please return, but he shall have leave to follow his own inclination, it is not hard to conjecture, that the desire of seeing a father's face would soon determine the choice of such a son that way. But how remote are the generality of them that profess themselves God's children from that pious ingenuity! We have taken root in the earth, and forgotten our heavenly originals and alliances. We are as inhabitants here, not pilgrims; hardly persuaded to entertain with any patience the thoughts of leaving our places on earth; which yet, do we what we can, shall shortly know us no more. In short then: that vile temper of spirit, against which I professedly bend myself in the following discourse, is, when men, not out of any sense of duty towards God, or solicitude for their own souls, but a mere sordid love to the body, and affixedness of heart to the earth and terrene things, cannot endure the thoughts of dying. And that which I persuade to is, that having the true prospect of the future blessedness before our eyes, and our hearts possessed with the comfortable hope of attaining to it, we shake off our earthly inclinations, and expect with desire and joy the time of our dismission hence, that we may enjoy it; which is the design of what was promised in the next place, namely.

(2.) The inforcement of this instruction. Suffer we therefore ourselves to be reasoned with about this matter; and let us consider whether we can in good earnest think such an aversation, as we discover, to our blessed translation hence, an excusable, a tolerable temper; or whether it be not highly reasonable, that we should entertain the thoughts, at least, with more content and patience (if not with more fervent desire) of our departure hence and introduction into that other state. Let me demand of thee, dost thou thus regret the thoughts of death, as being unwilling to die at all, or as being unwilling to die as yet? Is it the thing itself, or only the circumstance of time that thou exceptest against? It is likely thou wilt say that which will seem more plausible, and so fix only on the latter; and that thou wilt not profess to desire an eternity on earth, but only more time. Well, let that for the present be supposed, as it is a more modest, so to be a true account of thy desires: yet what is the reason of this moderation with thee herein; and that thou so limitest thyself? Is it that thou believest the blessedness of the other state will prove better than any thing thou canst enjoy here; and that thou art not willing eternally to be deprived of? But dost thou not think it is *now* better also? And what canst thou pretend, why what is *now* the best and

and most desirable good, should not be *now* chosen and desired out of hand? Or is it that thou thinkest it unbecomes thee to cross the supreme will of him that made thee, who hath determined, that all men once shall die? And then, how knowest thou but he hath also determined concerning thee, that thou shalt die the next day or hour? and it is only a present willingness to die, in subordination to the divine will, or upon supposition of it, thou art persuaded to. Why, art thou not afraid, lest thy present unwillingness should cross his present will? Dost thou not think that sovereign power is as sufficient to determine of the circumstance, as the thing itself? And art thou not ashamed to pretend an agreement with God about the thing itself, and yet differ with him about a circumstance? Shall that be a ground of quarrel between him and thee?

But while thou only professest that more modest desire of more time in the world, what security canst thou give, that when that desire hath been liberally gratified, it shall be at length laid down, and tumultuate no more? What bounds wilt thou fix to it, which thou darest undertake it shall not pass? Art thou sure, when thou shalt have lain at the world's breast ten or twenty years longer, thou wilt then imagine thyself to have drawn it dry; or that then thou shalt begin to nauseate the world and wish for heaven? Or hast thou not reason from thy former experience to suspect, that the longer thou dwellest on earth, the more terrene thou wilt grow; and that if thou be indisposed to leave it this day or year, thou wilt be more so the next; and so thy desire become boundless and infinite, which is to desire to be here always, the thing which thou seemedst so unwilling to own? And if that prove at last the true state of thy case, art thou then a christian, or art thou a man, that thou harbourest in thy breast so irreligious and irrational, yea, so sordid a wish? What! wish eternally to be affixed to a clod of earth? Is that at length become thy God? Or wilt thou say, he is thy God whom thou never desirest to enjoy? Or that thou hast already enough of him, but not of the world, and yet that he is thy God? Or wouldst thou overturn the laws of nature, and subvert the most sacred divine constitutions, abortive the designs of eternal wisdom and love, evacuate and nullify the great achievements of thy merciful and mighty Redeemer, only to gratify a sensual, brutish humour? But evident it is, thou dost only in vain disquiet thyself, thou canst not disturb the settled order of things. Eternal laws are not Repealable by a fond wish. Thou settest that dreadful thing, *death*, at nothing the further distance, by thine abhorrency of it. It will overtake thee whether thou wilt or no; and methinks thine own reason should instruct thee to attemper and form thyself to what thou canst not avoid, and possess thee with

such thoughts and desires as those of that discreet pagan, (Epictet.) "Lead me, O God, (saith he) whither thou wilt, and I will follow thee willingly; but if I be rebellious and refuse, I shall follow thee notwithstanding." What we cannot decline, it is better to bear willingly, than with a regret, that shall be both vain and afflictive.

And what hast thou hitherto met with in the world, that should so highly endear it to thee? Examine and search more narrowly into thy earthly comforts; what is there in them to make them self-desirable, or to be so for their own sakes? What is it to have thy flesh indulged and pleased? to have thy sense gratified? thy fancy tickled? What so great good, worthy of an immortal, reasonable spirit, canst thou find in meats and drinks, in full barns and coffers, in vulgar fame and applause, that should render these things desirable for themselves? And if there were any real felicity in these things for the present, whilst thou art permitted to enjoy them, yet dost thou not know that what thou enjoyest to day thou mayst lose to morrow, and that such other unthought of evils may befall thee, as may infuse a bitterness into all thou enjoyest, which causes immediately the enjoyment to cease, while the things themselves remain, and will be equal to a total loss of all? And thus (as the moralist ingenuously speaks (Sen.de brev. vit.) "thou wilt continually need another happiness to defend the former, and new wishes must still be made on the behalf of those which have already succeeded. But canst thou indeed think it worth the while, that the Maker of the universe should create a soul, and send it down into the world on purpose to superintend these trivial affairs, to keep alive a silly piece of well-figured earth while it eats and drinks, to move it to and fro in chase of shadows, to hold it up while others bow the knee and do it homage, if it had not some higher work to mind in reference to another state? Art thou contented to live long in the world to such purposes? What low worthless spirit is this, that had rather be so employed than in the visions of his Maker's face; that chooses thus to entertain itself on earth, rather than partake the effusions of divine glory above; that had rather creep with worms than soar with angels: associate with brutes than with the spirits of just men made perfect? Who can solve the phænomenon, or give a rational account why there should be such a creature as man upon the earth, abstracting from the hopes of another world? Who can think it the effect of an infinite wisdom; or account it a more worthy design, than the representing of such a scene of actions and affairs by puppets on a stage? For my part, upon the strictest inquiry, I see nothing in the life of man upon earth, that should render it, for itself,

more the matter of a rational election (supposing the free option given him in the first moment of his being) than presently again to cease to be the next moment.

Yea, and is there not enough obvious in every man's experience, to incline him rather to the contrary choice; and supposing a future blessedness in another world, to make him passionately desirous (with submission to the divine pleasure) of a speedy dismission into it? Do not the burdens that press us in this earthly tabernacle teach our very sense, and urge oppressed natures into involuntary groans, while as yet our consideration doth not intervene? And if we do consider, Is not every thought a sting, making a much deeper impression than what only toucheth our flesh and bones? Who can reflect upon his present state and not presently be in pangs? The troubles that follow humanity are many and great, those that follow Christianity more numerous and grievous. The sickness, pains, losses, disappointments, and whatsoever afflictions that are in the apostle's language, human, or common to men, (1 Cor. 10. 13.) (as are all the external sufferings of christians, in nature and kind, though they are liable to them upon an account peculiar to themselves, which there the apostle intimates,) are none of our greatest evils; yet even upon the account of them, have we any reason to be so much in love with so unkind a world? Is it not strange, our very bridewell should be such a heaven to us? But these things are little considerable in comparison of the more spiritual grievances of christians, as such; that is, those that afflict our souls while we are (under the conduct of Christ) designing for a blessed eternity; if we indeed make that our business, and do seriously intend our spirits in order thereto. The darkness of our beclouded minds; the glimmering, ineffectual apprehension we have of the most important things; the inconsistency of our shattered thoughts, when we would apply them to spiritual objects; the great difficulty of working off an ill frame of heart, and the no less difficulty of retaining a good: our being so frequently tossed as between heaven and hell; when we sometimes think ourselves to have even attained and hope to descend no more, and are all on a sudden plunged in the ditch, so as that our own clothes might abhor us; fall so low into an earthly temper, that we can like nothing heavenly or divine, and because we cannot, are enforced justly most of all to dislike ourselves! are these things little with us? How can we forbear to cry out of the depths, to the Father of our spirits, that he would pity and relieve his own offspring? Yea, are we not weary of our crying; and yet more weary of holding in? How do repelled temptations return again, and vanquished corruptions recover

strength! We know not when our work is done. We are miserable that we need to be always watching, and more miserable that we cannot watch, but are so often surprised and overcome of evil. We say sometimes with ourselves, we will seek relief in retirement; but we cannot retire from ourselves; or in converse with godly friends, but they sometimes prove snares to us and we to them, or we hear but our own miseries repeated in their complaints. Would we pray? How faint is the breath we utter? How long is it before we can get our souls possessed with any becoming apprehensions of God, or lively sense of our own concernments? Would we meditate? We sometimes go about to compose our thoughts, but we may as well assay to hold the winds in our fist. If we venture forth into the world, how do our senses betray us? how are we mocked with their impostures? Their nearer objects become with us the only realities, and eternal things are all vanished into airy shadows. Reason and faith are laid asleep, and our sense dictates to us what we are to believe and do, as if it were our only guide and lord. And what are we not yet weary? Is it reasonable to continue in this state of our own choice? Is misery become so natural to us, so much our element that we cannot affect to live out of it? Is the darkness and dirt of a dungeon more grateful to us than a free open air and sun? Is this flesh of ours so lovely a thing, that we had rather suffer so many deaths in it, than one in putting it off and mortality with it? While we carry it about us, our souls impart a kind of life to it, and it gives them death in exchange. Why do we not cry out more feelingly, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Is it not grievous to us to have so cumbersome a yoke-fellow, to be tied (as Mezentius is said to have done) the living and the dead together. Do we not find the distempers of our spirits are mostly from these bodies we are so in love with, either as the proper springs or as the occasion of them? From what cause is our drowsy sloth, our eager passions, our aversion to spiritual objects, but, from this impure flesh; or what else is the subject about which our vexatious cares, or torturing fears, our bitter griefs are taken up day by day?

And why do we not consider, that it is only our love to it that gives strength and vigour to the most of our temptations, as wherein it is most immediately concerned, and which makes them so often victorious, and thence to become our after-afflictions. He that hath learned to mortify the inordinate love of the body, will he make it the business of his life to purvey for it? Will he offer violence to his own soul, to secure it from

violence? Will he comply with men's lusts and humours for its advantage and accommodation; or yield himself to the tyranny of his own avarice for its future, or of his more sensual lusts for its present content? Will it not rather be pleasing to him, that his outward man be exposed to perish, while his inward man is renewed day by day? He to whom the thoughts are grateful of laying it down, will not (though he neglect not duty towards it) spend his days in its continual service, and make his soul a hell by a continual provision for the flesh and the lusts of it. That is cruel love that shall enslave a man, and subject him to so vile and ignoble a servitude. And it discovers a sordid temper to be so imposed upon. How low are our spirits sunk, that we disdain not so base a vassalage! God and nature have obliged us to live in bodies for a time, but they have not obliged us to measure ourselves by them, to confine our desires and designs to their compass, to look no further than their concernments, to entertain no previous joys in the hope of being one day delivered from them. No such hard law is laid upon us. But how apt are we to become herein a most oppressive law to ourselves; and not only to lodge in filthy, carthen cottages, but to love them and confine ourselves to them, loth so much as to peep out. It is the apt expression of a philosopher, upbraiding that base, low temper, Η δε δειλη ψυχη κατορωρυγμενη εν σωματι, ως ερπετον νωθες εις φωλεον, φιλει τον φωλεον, &c. *the degenerous soul buried in the body, is as a slothful, creeping thing, that loves its hole and is loth to come forth.* Max. Tyr. Diss. 41.

And methinks, if we have no love for our better and more noble self, we should not be altogether unapprehensive of an invitation upon us, to express a dutiful love to the Author of our beings; doth it consist with the love we owe to him, to desire always to lurk in the dark, and never to come into his blessed presence? Is that our love, that we never care to come nigh him? Do we not know, that while we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord? 2 Cor. 5. 6, 8. Should we not therefore be willing rather to be present with the Lord, and absent from the body? Should we not put on a confidence, a holy fortitude, (as it is there expressed, we are confident, or of good courage, and thence, willing, &c.) that might carry us through the grave to him. As is the brave speech of that last mentioned philospher, Δειλος οδυρεται, *God will call thee ere long, expect his call. Old age will come upon thee, and shew thee the way thither; and death, which he that is possessed with a base fear, laments and dreads as it draws on, but he that is a lover of God expects it with joy, and with courage meets it when it comes.* &c. Item. diss. 1. Is our love to God so faint and weak, that it

dares not encounter death, nor venture upon the imaginary terrors of the grave to go to him? How unsuitable is this to the character which is given of a saint's love? Cant. 8. And how expressly are we told, that he who loves his life better than Christ, or that even hates it not for his sake, (as certainly he cannot be said to do, that is not willing to part with it to enjoy him) cannot be his disciple? If our love to God be not *supreme* it is *none*, or not such as can denominate us lovers of him; and will we pretend to be so, when we love a putid flesh and this base earth better than him? And have we not professedly, as a fruit of our avowed love to him, surrendered ourselves? Are we not his devoted ones? Will we be his, and yet our own? or pretend ourselves dedicated to his holy pleasure, and will yet be at our own disposal, and so dispose of ourselves too, as that we may be most ungrateful to him, and most uncapable of converse with him? How doth this love of a perishing life and of a little animated clay stop all the effusions of the love of God, suspend its sweet and pleasant fruits, which should be always exerting themselves towards him? Where is their love, obedience, joy, and praise, who are through the fear of death all their lives subject to bondage, and kept under a continual dismal expectation of an unavoidable dissolution? But must the great God lose his due acknowledgments because we will not understand wherein he deals well with us? Is his mercy therefore no mercy? As we cannot nullify his truth by our unbelief, so nor his goodness by our disesteem. But yet consider, doth it not better become thee to be grateful than repine that God will one day unbind thy soul and set thee free, knock of thy fetters and deliver thee out of the house of thy bondage; couldst thou upon deliberate thoughts judge it tolerable, should he doom thee to this earth for ever? (as the pagan emperor and philosopher excellently speaks M. Aurel. Ant. de vit. sua. l 12. απιθι ιλεως ο απολυων ιλεως *He hath however judged otherwise, who is the author both of the first composition of thy present being and now of the dissolution of it; thou wert the cause of neither, therefore depart and be thankful, for he that dismisseth thee dealeth kindly with thee.* If yet thou understandest it not, yet remember, it is thy Father that disposes thus of thee. How unworthy is it to distrust his love? what child would be afraid to compose itself to sleep in the parent's bosom? It expresses nothing of the duty and ingenuity, but much of the frowardness and folly of a child: they sometimes cry vehemently in the undressing; but should their cries be regarded by the most indulgent parent? or are they fit to be imitated by us?

We have no excuse for this our forwardness. The blessed God hath told us his gracious purposes concerning us, and we

are capable of understanding him. What if he had totally hidden from us our future state? and that we knew nothing, but of going into an eternal, silent darkness? the authority of a Creator ought to have awed us into a silent submission. But when we are told of such a glory, that it is but drawing aside the fleshly vail and we presently behold it, methinks the blessed hour should be expected not with patience only, but with ravishing joy. Did we hear of a country in this world, where we might live in continual felicity, without toil, or sickness, or grief, or fear, who would not wish to be there, though the passage were troublesome? Have we not heard enough of heaven to allure us thither? Or is the eternal truth, of suspected credit with us? Are God's own reports of the future glory unworthy our belief or regard? How many, upon the credit of his word, are gone already triumphantly into glory? that only seeing the promises afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them; and never after, owned themselves under any other notion than of pilgrims on earth, longing to be at home in their most desirable, heavenly country. We are not the first that are to open heaven; the main body of saints is already there; it is in comparison of their number, but a scattering remnant that are now, alive upon the earth. How should we long to be associated to that glorious assembly? Methinks we should much more regret our being so long left behind.

But if we should desire still to be so, why may not all others as well as we, and as much expect to be gratified as we? And then we should agree in desiring, that our Redeemer's triumph might be deferred, that his body might yet remain incomplete, that he might still be debarred of the long expected fruit of the travail of his soul, that the name of God might be still subjected to the blasphemy and reproach of an atheistical world, who have all along said with derision, Where is the promise of his coming? Would we have all his designs to be still unfinished, and so mighty wheels stand still for us, while we sport ourselves in the dust of the earth, and indulge our sensual inclination, which sure this bold desire must argue to be very predominant in us; and take heed it argue not its habitual prevalency. At least, if it discover not our present sensuality, it discovers our former sloth and idleness. It may be, we may excuse our averseness to die by our unpreparedness, that is, one fault with another: though that be besides the case I am speaking of. What then have we been doing all this while? What! were the affairs of thy soul not thought of till now? Take then thy reproof from a heathen, (Sen.) that it may convince thee the more, "No one, saith he, divides away his money from himself, but yet men divide away their very life—But doth it not

shame thee (he after adds) to reserve only the relics of thy life to thyself, and to devote that time only to a good mind which thou canst employ upon no other thing? How late is it to begin to live when we should make an end; and defer all good thoughts to such an age as possibly few do ever reach to. The truth is (as he speaks) we have not little time but we lose much, we have time enough were it well employed, therefore we cannot say we receive a short life, but we make it so, we are not indigent of time but prodigal: what a pretty contradiction is it to complain of the shortness of time, and yet do what we can to precipitate its course; to hasten it by that we call pastime? If it have been so with thee, art thou to be trusted with more time?" But as thy case is, I cannot wonder that the thoughts of death be most unwelcome to thee; who art thou that thou shouldst desire the day of the Lord? I can only say to thee, hasten thy preparation, have recourse to rule second, and third, and accordingly guide thyself till thou find thy spirit made more suitable to this blessedness; that it become savoury and grateful to thy soul, and thy heart be set upon it. Hence thou mayst be reconciled to the grave, and the thoughts of death may cease to be a terror to thee.

And when thou art attained so far, consider thy great advantage in being willing and desirous to die upon this further account, That thy desire shall now be pitched upon a thing so certain. Thine other desires have met with many a disappointment. Thou hast set thy heart upon other things, and they have deceived thy most earnest, thirsty expectations. Death will not do so. Thou wilt now have one certain hope; one thing in reference whereto thou mayst say, "I am sure." Wait awhile, this peaceful sleep will shortly seize thy body and awaken thy soul. It will calmly period all thy troubles, and bring thee to a blessed rest. But now, if only the mere terror and gloominess of dying, trouble thy thoughts, this of all other seems the most inconsiderable pretence against a willing surrender of ourselves to death. Reason hath overcome it, natural courage, yea, some men's atheism; Shall not faith? Are we not ashamed to consider, what confidence and desire of death some heathens have expressed? Some that have had no preapprehension or belief of another state (though there were very few of them,) and so no hope of a consequent blessedness to relieve them, have yet thought it unreasonable to disgust the thoughts of death. What wouldst thou think if thou hadst nothing but the sophisms of such to oppose to all thy dismal thoughts? I have met with one arguing thus, (Epicurus in Gassend. Synt.) "Death which is accounted the most dreadful of all evils, is nothing to us (saith he) because while we are in being, death is

not yet present, and when death is present we are not in being; so that it neither concerns us, as living, nor dead; for while we are alive it hath not touched us, when we are dead we are not.—Moreover (saith he) the exquisite knowledge of this, that death belongs not to us, makes us enjoy this mortal life with comfort; not by adding any thing to our uncertain time, but by taking away the desire of immortality." Shall they comfort themselves upon so wretched a ground, with a little sophistry, and the hope of extinguishing all desire of immortality; and shall not we, by cherishing this blessed hope of enjoying shortly an immortal glory?

Others of them have spoken magnificently of a certain contempt of this bodily life, and a not only not fearing but desiring to die, upon a fixed apprehension of the distinct and purer and immortal nature of the soul, and the preconceived hope of a consequent felicity. I shall set down some of their words, added to what have been occasionally mentioned, (amongst that plentiful variety wherewith one might fill a volume,) purposely to shame the more terrene temper of many christians.

"The soul (saith one of them*) is an invisible thing, and is going into another place, suitable to itself, that is noble, and pure, and invisible, even into hades, indeed, to the good and wise God, whither also my soul shall shortly go, if he see good. But this (he saith in what follows) belongs only to such a soul as goes out of the body pure, that draws nothing corporeal along with it, did not willingly communicate with the body in life, but did even fly from it and gather up itself into itself, always meditating this one thing. A soul so affected, shall it not go to something like itself, divine, (and what is divine, is immortal and wise,) whither when it comes, it becomes blessed, free from error, ignorance, fears, and wild or enormous loves, and all other evils incident to men."

† One writing the life of that rare person Plotinus, says, That he seemed as if he were in some sort ashamed that he was in body; which (however it would less become a christian,

* Plato in Phedone, From whom I adjoin what (to them that understand it) is more elegant in his own language, ον ιδης αγανακτουντα μελλοντα αποθνησκειν ουκ αρ φιλοσοφος αλλα τις φιλοσωματος. Ibid. Αγριων ερωτων, if you see any one overwhelmed with grief in the approach of death, he is not a philosopher, but a lover of his own body.

† Porphyrius. Plotinus Ennead. 7. Lib. 6. (whom though a just admirer of him would fain have men reckon to have been a christian, because he writes much against the Pseudo-Christian gnostics, nothing against christianity, yet it appears not he ever made profession of it. Ennead. 1. lib. 7.

yet) in one that knew nothing of an incarnate Redeemer, it discovered a refined, noble spirit. The same person speaks almost the language of the apostle, concerning his being wrapt up into the third heaven, and tells of such an alienation of the soul from the body: "That when once it finds God (whom he had before been speaking of under the name of the το καλον or *the beauty)* shining in upon it, it now no longer feels its body, or takes notice of its being in the body, but even forgets its own being, that it is a man, or a living creature, or any thing else whatsoever, for it is not at leisure to mind any thing else, nor doth it desire to be: yea, and having sought him out, he immediately meets, it, presenting itself to him. It only views him instead of itself,—and would not now change its state for any thing, not if one could give it the whole heaven in exchange."

"And elsewhere discussing, whether life in the body be good and desirable, yea or no, he concludes it to be good, not as it is a union of the soul and body, but as it may have that virtue annexed to it, by which what is really evil may be kept off. But yet, that death is a greater good: that life in the body is in itself evil; but the soul is by virtue stated in goodness; not as enlivening the body with which it is compounded, but as it severs and sejoins itself from it; meaning so, as to have as little communion as possibly it can with it." To which purpose is the expression of another: "That the soul of a happy man so collects and gathers up itself out from the body while it is yet contained in it—and that it was possessed of that fortitude, as not to dread its departure from it." Marin. Proclus.

Another gives this character of a good man, "That as he lived in simplicity, tranquillity, purity, not being offended at any that they believed him not to live so; he also comes to the end of his life, pure, quiet, and easy to be dissolved, disposing himself without any constraint to his lot." ευλυτως. M. Aur. Ant. Another is brought in speaking thus, "If God should grant me to become a child again, (Cato in Cicerone de Senect.) to send forth my renewed infant cries from my cradle, and having even run out my race, to begin it again, I should most earnestly refuse it; for what profit hath this life? and how much toil?—Yet I do not repent that I have lived, because I hope that I have not lived in vain. And now I go out of this life, not as out of my dwelling-house, but my inn. O blessed day! when I shall enter into that council and assembly of souls, and depart from this rude and disorderly rout and crew, &c."

I shall add another, (of a not much unlike strain and rank, as either being not an open, or no constant friend to Christianity,) that discoursing who is the heir of divine things, saith, "He

cannot be, who is in love with this animal, sensitive life; but only that purest mind that is inspired from above, that partakes of a heavenly and divine portion, that only despises the body, &c." with much more of like import. Philo Judæus.

Yea, so have some been transported with the desire of immortality, that (being wholly ignorant of the sin of self-murder,) they could not forbear doing violence on themselves. Among the Indians, (Q. Curt. lib. 8.) two thousand years ago, were a sort of wise men, as they were called, that held it a reproach to die of age, or a disease, and were wont to burn themselves alive, thinking the flames were polluted if they came amidst them dead. The story of * Cleombrotus is famous, who hearing Plato discourse of the immortality of the soul, by the sea-side, leaped from him into the sea, that he might presently be in that state. And it is storied, that † Nero refused to put Apollonius to death, though he were very much incensed against him, only upon the apprehensions he had that he was very desirous to die, because he would not so far gratify him.

I only make this improvement of all this; Christian principles and rules, do neither hurry nor misguide men, but the end (as we have it revealed) should much more powerfully and constantly attract us. Nothing is more unsuitable to Christianity our way, nor to that blessedness the end of it, than a terrene spirit. They have nothing of the true light and impress of the gospel now, nor are they ever like to attain the vision of the blessed face of God, and the impress of his likeness hereafter, that desire it not above all things, and are not willing to quit all things else for it. And is it not a just exprobration of our earthliness and carnality, if mere philosophers and pagans should give better proof than we of a spirit erected above the world, and alienated from what is temporary and terrene? Shall their gentilism outvie our Christianity? Methinks a generous indignation of this reproach should inflame our souls, and contribute somewhat to the refining of them to a better and more spiritual temper.

Now therefore, O all you that name yourselves by that worthy name of christians, that profess the religion taught by him that was not of the earth, earthly, but the Lord from heaven; you that are partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the great Apostle and High-Priest of your profession, who only took our flesh that we might partake of his Spirit, bore our earthly, that we might bear his heavenly image, descended that he might

* Cicer. Quæst, Tuscul.

† Scil. Domitianus aliquoties sic dictus. Philostr. in vit. Apoll. Tyanæi.

cause us to ascend. Seriously bethink yourselves of the scope and end of his apostleship and priesthood. He was sent out from God to invite and conduct you to him, to bring you into the communion of his glory and blessedness. He came upon a message and treaty of peace: to discover his Father's love and win yours: to let you know how kind thoughts the God of love had conceived to you-wards; and that, however you had hated him without cause, and were bent to do so without end, he was not so affected towards you: to settle a friendship, and to admit you to the participation of his glory. Yea, he came to give an instance, and exemplify, to the world in his own person, how much of heaven he could make to dwell in mortal flesh; how possible he could render it, to live in this world as unrelated to it; how gloriously the divine life could triumph over all the infirmities of frail humanity. And so leave men a certain proof and pledge, to what perfections human nature should be improved by his grace and Spirit, in all them that should resign themselves to his conduct, and follow his steps: that heaven and earth were not so far asunder, but he knew how to settle a commerce and intercourse between them: that a heavenly life was possible to be transacted here, and certain to be gloriously rewarded and perfected hereafter.

And having testified these things, he seals the testimony, and opens the way for the accomplishment of all by his death. Your heavenly Apostle becomes a Priest and a Sacrifice at once: that no doubt might remain among men of his sincerity, in what even dying he ceased not to profess and avow. And that by his own propitiatory blood a mutual reconciliation might be wrought between God and you; that your hearts might be won to him, and possessed with an ingenuous shame of your ever having been his enemies. And that his displeasure might for ever cease towards you, and be turned into everlasting friendship and love: that eternal redemption being obtained, heaven might be opened to you, and you finally be received to the glory of God; your hearts being bent thitherward and made willing to run through whatsoever difficulties of life or death to attain it. Do not think that Christ came into the world and died to procure the pardon of your sins, and so translate you to heaven; while your hearts should still remain cleaving to the earth. He came and returned to prepare a way for you; and then call, not drag you thither: that by his precepts, and promises, and example, and Spirit, he might form and fashion your souls to that glorious state; and make you willing to abandon all things for it. And lo! now the God of all grace is calling you by Jesus Christ unto his eternal glory. Direct then your eyes and hearts to that mark, the prize of the high calling of God in

Christ Jesus. It is ignominious, by the common suffrage of the civilized world, not to intend the proper business of our calling. It is your calling to forsake this world and mind the other; make haste then to quit yourselves of your entanglements, of all earthly dispositions and affections. Learn to live in this world as those that are not of it, that expect every day, and wish to leave it, whose hearts are gone already.

It is dreadful to die with pain and regret: to be forced out of the body; to die a violent death, and go away with an unwilling reluctant heart. The wicked is driven way in his wickedness. Fain he would stay longer, but cannot. He hath not power over the spirit, to retain the spirit, nor hath he power in death. He must away whether he will or no. And indeed much against his will. So it cannot but be, where there is not a previous knowledge and love of a better state, where the soul understands it not, and is not effectually attempered and framed to it.

O get then the lovely image of the future glory into your minds. Keep it ever before your eyes. Make it familiar to your thoughts. Imprint daily there these words, I shall behold thy face, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness. And see that your souls be enriched with that righteousness, have inwrought into them that holy rectitude, that may dispose them to that blessed state. Then will you die with your own consent, and go away, not driven, but allured and drawn. You will go, as the redeemed of the Lord, with everlasting joy upon their heads: as those that know whither you go, even to a state infinitely worthy of your desires and choice, and where it is best for you to be. You will part with your souls, not by a forcible separation, but a joyful surrender and resignation. They will dislodge from this earthly tabernacle, rather as putting it off than having it rent and torn away. Loosen yourselves from this body by degrees, as we do any thing we would remove from a place where it sticks fast. Gather up your spirits into themselves. Teach them to look upon themselves as a distinct thing. Inure them to the thoughts of a dissolution. Be continually as taking leave. Cross and disprove the common maxim, and let your hearts, which they use to say are wont to die last, die first. Prevent death, and be mortified towards every earthly thing beforehand, that death may have nothing to kill but your body; and that you may not die a double death in one hour, and suffer the death of your body and of your love to it both at once. Much less that this should survive to your greater, and even incurable misery. Shake off your bands and fetters, the terrene affections that so closely confine you to the house of your bondage. And lift up your heads in expectation of the approaching jubilee, the day of your redemption; when you are to go out free, and enter into

the glorious liberty of the sons of God; when you shall serve, and groan, and complain no longer. Let it be your continual song, and the matter of your daily praise, that the time of your happy deliverance is hastening on; that ere long you shall be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. That he hath not doomed you to an everlasting imprisonment within those close and clayey walls, wherein you have been so long shut up from the beholding of his sight and glory. In the thoughts of this, while the outward man is sensibly perishing, let the inward revive and be renewed day by day. "What prisoner would be sorry to see the walls of his prison house (so a heathen speaks, Max.Tyr.Dissert.41.) mouldering down, and the hopes arriving to him of being delivered out of that darkness that had buried him, of recovering his liberty, and enjoying the free air and light. What champion inured to hardship, would stick to throw off rotten rags, and rather expose a naked, placid, free body, to naked, placid, free air? The truly generous soul (so he a little above) "never leaves the body against its will." Rejoice that it is the gracious pleasure of thy good God, thou shalt not always inhabit a dungeon, nor lie amidst so impure and disconsolate darkness? that he will shortly exchange thy filthy garments for those of salvation and praise. The end approaches. As you turn over these leaves, so are your days turned over. And as you are now arrived to the end of this book, God will shortly write *finis* to the book of your life on earth, and shew you your names written in heaven, in the book of that life which shall never end.

THE

VANITY

OF THIS

MORTAL LIFE:

OR,

OF MAN,

CONSIDERED ONLY IN HIS

Present Mortal State.

TO THE

DESERVEDLY HONOURED,

JOHN UPTON OF LUPTON, ESQ.

WITH THE MANY

Surviving Branches

FORMERLY SPRUNG OUT OF THAT RELIGIOUS FAMILY, AND

THE WORTHY CONSORTS

OF ANY OF THEM.

SINCE it is the lot of the following pages to be exposed to public view; there is somewhat of justice in it, to yourselves or me, that the world do also know wherein divers of you have contributed thereto - that if any thing redound hence to public advantage, it may be understood to be owing in part to you; or, if it shall be reckoned a useless trouble, in this way to represent things, so obvious to common notice, and whereof so much is already said, all the blame to the publication be not imputed (as it doth not belong) to me only. But I must there crave your excuse, that, on this account, give you a narrative of what (for the most part) you already know and may possibly not delight to remember; both because it is now become convenient that others should know it too, and not necessary to be put into a distinct preface! and because to yourselves the review of those less pleasing passages may be attended with a fruit which may be some recompence for their want of pleasure.

Therefore give the reader leave to take notice, and let it not be grievous to you that I remind you, that after this your near relation * (whose death gave the occasion of the ensuing meditations) had from his youth lived between twenty and thirty years of his age in Spain, your joint-importunity had at length obtained from him a promise of returning; whereof, when you were in somewhat a near expectation, a sudden disease in so few days landed him in another world, that the first notice you had of his death or sickness, was by the arrival of that vessel (clad in mourning-attire,) which, according to his own desire in his sickness, brought over the deserted body

* Mr. Anthony Upton, the son of John Upton, of Lupton, Esq.

to its native place of Lupton; that thence it might find a grave, where it first received a soul; and obtain a mansion in the earth, where first it became one to a reasonable spirit. A little before this time, the desire of an interview among yourselves (which the distance of your habitations permitted not to be frequent) had induced divers of you to appoint a meeting at some middle place, whereby the trouble of a long journey might be conveniently shared among you. But, before that agreed resolution could have its accomplishmen, this sad and most unexpected event intervening, altered the place, the occasion, and design of your meeting; but effected the thing itself, and brought together no less than twenty, the brothers and sisters of the deceased, or their consorts; besides his many nephews and nieces and other relations, to the mournful solemnity of the interment. Within the time of our being together upon this sad account, this passage of the Psalmist here insisted on, came into discourse among us; being introduced by an occasion, which (though then, it may be unknown to the most of you) was somewhat rare, and not unworthy observation; namely, that one of yourselves having been some time before surprised with an unusual sadness, joined with an expectation of ill tidings, upon no known cause, had so urgent an inculcation of those words, as not to be able to forbear the revolving them much of the former part of that day, in the latter part whereof the first notice was brought to that place of this so near a relation's decease.

Certain months after, some of you with whom I was then conversant in London, importuned me to have somewhat from me in writing upon that subject. Whereto I at length agreed, with a cautionary request, that it might not come into many hands, but might remain (as the occasion was) among yourselves. Nor will I deny it to have been some inducement to me to apply my thoughts to that theme, that it had been so suggested as was said. For such presages and abodings, as that above-mentioned, may reasonably be thought to owe themselves to some more steady and universal principle than casualty, or the party's own imagination: by whose more noble recommendation (that such a gloomy premonition might carry with it not what should only afflict, but also instruct and teach) this subject did seem offered to our meditation. Accordingly therefore, after my return to the place of my abode, I hastily drew up the substance of the following discourse; which, a year ago, I transmitted into their hands who desired it from me, without reserving to myself any copy. Hereby it became difficult to me, presently to comply (besides divers considerations I might have against the thing itself) with that joint request of some of you (in a letter, which my removal into another kingdom occasioned to come long after to my hands) that I would consent these papers might be made public. For as I have reason to be conscious to myself of disadvantages enough to discourage any undertaking of that kind; so I am more especially sensible, that so cursory and superficial a management of a subject so important (though its private occasion and design

at first might render it excusable to those few friends for whom it was meant) cannot but be liable to the hard censure (not to say contempt) of many whom discourses of this kind should more designedly serve. And therefore, though my willingness to be serviceable in keeping alive the apprehension and expectation of another state, my value of your judgments who conceive what is here done may be useful thereto, and my peculiar respects to yourselves, the members and appendants of a family to which (besides some relation) I have many obligations and endearments, do prevail with me not wholly to deny; yet pardon me that I have suspended my consent to this publication, till I should have a copy transmitted to me from some of you, for my necessary review of so hasty a production, that I might not offer to the view of the world, what, after I had penned it, had scarce passed my own. And now, after so long an expectation, those papers are but this last week come to my hands: I here return them with little or no alteration; save, that what did more directly concern the occasion, towards the close is transferred hither; but with the addition of almost all the directive part of the use: which I submit together to your pleasure and disposal.

And I shall now take the liberty to add, my design in consenting to this request of yours (and I hope the same of you in making it) is nor to erect a monument to the memory of the deceased, (which how little doth it signify!) nor to spread the fame of your family, (though the visible blessing of God upon it, in the fruitfulness, piety, and mutual love, wherein it hath flourished for some generations, do challenge observation, both as to those branches of it which grow in their own more natural soil, and those, as I have now occasions to take further notice, that I find to have been transplanted into another country;) but that such into whose hands this little treatise shall fall, may be induced to consider the true end of their beings; to examine and discuss the matter more thoroughly with themselves, what it may or can be supposed such a sort of creatures was made and placed on this earth for: that when they shall have reasoned themselves into a settled apprehension of the worthy and important ends they are capable of attaining, and are visibly designed to, they may be seized with a noble disdain of living beneath themselves and the bounty of their Creator.

It is obvious to common observation, how flagrant and intense a zeal men are often wont to express for their personal reputation, the honour of their families, yea, or for the glory of their nation: but how few are acted by that more laudable and enlarged zeal for the dignity of mankind! How few are they that resent the common and vile depression of their own species? Or that, while in things of lightest consideration they strive with emulous endeavour, that they and their relatives may excel other men, do reckon it a reproach if in matters of the greatest consequence they and all men should not excel beasts? How few that are not contented to confine their utmost designs and expectations within the same narrow limits? through a mean and inglorious self-despiciency confessing in themselves (to

the truth's and their own wrong)an incapacity of greater things; and with most injurious falsehood, proclaiming the same of all mankind besides.

If he that, amidst the hazards of a dubious war betrays the interest and honour of his country be justly infamous, and thought worthy severest punishment; I see not why a debauched sensualist, that lives as if he were created only to indulge his appetite; that so villifies the notion of man, as if he were made but to eat and drink, and sport, to please only his sense and fancy; that in this time and state of conflict between the powers of this present world, and those of the world to come, quits his party, bids open defiance to humanity, abjures the noble principles and ends, forsakes the laws and society of all that are worthy to be esteemed men, abandons the common and rational hope of mankind concerning a future immortallity, and herds himself among brute creatures I say, I see not why such a one should not be scorned and abhorred as a traitor to the whole race and nation of reasonable creatures, as a fugitive from the tents, and deserter of the common interest of men; and that, both for the vileness of his practice, and the danger of his example.

And who, that hath open eyes, beholds not the dreadful instances and increase of this defection? When it hath prevailed to that degree already, that in civilized, yea, in Christian countries, (as they yet affect to be called) the practice is become fashionable and in credit, which can square with no other principle than the disbelief of a future state, as if it were but a mere poetic or (at best) a political fiction. And, as if so impudent infidelity would pretend not to a connivance only but a sanction, it is reckoned an odd and uncouth thing for a man to live as if he thought otherwise; and a great presumption to seem to dissent from the prophane infidel crew. As if the matter were already formally determined in the behalf of irreligion, and the doctrine of the life to come had been clearly condemned in open council as a detestable heresy. For what tenet was ever more exploded and hooted at, than that practice is which alone agrees with this? Or what series of course of repeated villanies can ever be more ignominious than (in vulgar estimate) a course of life so transacted as doth become the expectation of a blessed immortality? And what, after so much written and spoken by persons of all times and religions for the immortality of the human soul, and so common an acknowledgment thereof by pagans, mahometans, jews, and christians, is man now at last condemned and doomed to a perpetual death, as it were, by the consent and suffrage even of men; and that too without trial or hearing; and not by the reason of men, but their lusts only? As if (with a loud and violent cry) they would assassinate and stifle this belief and hope, but not judge it. And shall the matter be thus given up as hopeless; and the victory be yielded to prosperous wickedness, and a too successful conspiracy of vile miscreants against both their Maker and their own stock and race?

One would think whosoever have remaining in them any conscience

of obligation and duty to the common Parent and Author of our beings, and remembrance of our divine original, any breathings of our ancient hope, any sense of human honour, any resentments of so vile an indignity to the nature of man, any spark of a just and generous indignation for so opprobrious a contumely to their own kind and order in the creation, should oppose themselves with an heroic vigour to this treacherous and unnatural combination. And let us (my worthy friends) be provoked, in our several capacities, to do our parts herein; and, at least, so to live and converse in this world, that the course and tenour of our lives may import an open asserting of our hopes in another; and may let men see we are not ashamed to own the belief of a life to come. Let us by a patient continuance in well-doing (how low designs soever others content themselves to pursue) seek honour, glory, and immortality to ourselves; and by our avowed, warrantable ambition in this pursuit, justify our great and bountiful Creator, who hath made us not in vain, but for so high and great things; and glorify our blessed Redeemer, who amidst the gloomy and disconsolate darkness of this wretched world, when it was overspread with the shadow of death, hath brought life and immortality to light in the gospel. Let us labour both to feel and express the power of that religion which hath the inchoation of the (participated) divine life for its principle, and the perfection and eternal perpetuation thereof for its scope and end.

Nor let the time that hath since elapsed be found to have worn out with you the useful impressions which this monitory surprising instance of our mortality did at first make. But give me leave to inculcate from it what was said to you when the occasion was fresh and new: that we labour more deeply to apprehend God's dominion over his creatures; and that he made us principally for himself, and for ends that are to be compassed in the future state; and not for the temporary satisfaction and pleasure of one another in this world. Otherwise providence had never been guilty of such a solecism, to take out one from a family long famous for so exemplary mutual love, and dispose him into so remote a part, not permitting to most of his nearest relations the enjoyment of him for almost thirty years (and therein all the flower) of his age, and at last, when you were expecting the man, send you home the breathless frame wherein he lived. Yet it was not contemptible that you had that, and that dying (as Joseph) in a strange land, he gave, also, commandment concerning his bones; that though in his life we was (mostly) separated from his brethren, he might in death be gathered to his fathers It was some evidence (though you wanted not better) that amidst the traffic of Spain, he more esteemed the religion of England, and therefore would rather his dust should associate with theirs, with whom also he would rather his spirit should. But whatever it did evidence, it occasioned so much, that you had that so general meeting with one another, which otherwise probably you would not have had, nor are likely again to have, (so hath providence scattered you) in this world; and that it proved a more serious meeting than other-

wise it might: for however it might blamelessly have been designed to have met together at a cheerful table, God saw it fitter to order the meeting at a mournful grave; and to make the house that received you (the native place to many of you) the house of mourning rather than of feasting. The one would have had more quick relishes of a present pleasure, but the other was likely to yield the more lasting sense of an after-profit. Nor was it an ill errand to come together (though from afar for divers of you) to learn to die. As you might, by being so sensibly put in mind of it, though you did not see that very part acted itself. And accept this endeavour, to further you in your preparations for that change, as some testimony of the remembrance I retain of your most obliging respects and love, and of my still continuing

Your affectionate and respectful kinsman,
and servant in our common Lord,

Antrim, J. HOWE.
April 12, 1671.

THE

VANITY OF MAN

AS

MORTAL.

Psal. 89. 47, 48.

Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain.

What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.

WE are not concerned to be particular and curious in the inquiry, touching the special reference or occasion of the foregoing complaints, from the 37 verse. It is enough to take notice, for our present purpose, that besides the evil which had already befallen the plaintiff, a farther danger nearly threatened him, that carried death in the face of it, and suggested somewhat frightful apprehensions of his mortal state, which drew from him this quick and sensible petition in reference to his own private concern, remember how short my time is and did presently direct his eye with a sudden glance from the view of his own, to reflect on the common condition of man, whereof he expresses his resentment, first, in a hasty expostulation with God, "Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?"—Then, secondly, in a pathetic discourse with himself, representing the reason of that rough charge, "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver," &c. As though he had said; When I add to the consideration of my short time, that of dying mankind, and behold a dark and deadly shade universally overspreading the world, the whole species of human creatures vanishing, quitting the stage round about me, and disappearing almost as soon as they shew themselves: have I not a fair and plausible ground for that (seemingly rude) challenge? Why is there so unaccountable a phænomenon, such a creature made to no pur-

pose? the noblest part of this inferior creation brought forth into being without any imaginable design? I know not how to untie the knot, upon this only view of the case, or avoid the absurdity. It is hard sure to design the supposal, (or what it may yet seem hard to suppose,) that all men were made in vain.

It appears, the expostulation was somewhat passionate, and did proceed upon the sudden view of this disconsolate case, very abstractly considered, and by itself only; and that he did not in that instant look beyond it to a better and more comfortable scene of things. An eye bleered with present sorrow, sees not so far, nor comprehends so much at one view, as it would at another time, or as it doth, presently, when the tear is wiped out, and its own beams have cleared it up. We see he did quickly look further, and had got a more lightsome prospect, when in the next words we find him contemplating God's sworn loving-kindness unto David: (ver. 49.) the truth and stability whereof he at the same time expressly acknowledges, while only the form of his speech doth but seem to import a doubt—"Where are they?" But yet—they were sworn in truth upon which argument he had much enlarged in the former part of the psalm; and it still lay deep in his soul, though he were now a little diverted from the present consideration of it. Which, since it turns the scales with him, it will be needfull to inquire into the weight and import of it. Nor have we any reason to think, that David was either so little a prophet or a saint, as in his own thoughts to refer those magnificent things (the instances of that loving-kindness comfirmed by oath, which he recites from the 19 verse of the psalm to the 38, as spoken from the mouth of God, and declared to him by vision) to the dignity of his own person, and the grandeur and perpetuity of his kingdom; as if it were ultimately meant of himself, that God would make him his first-born, higher than the kings of the earth,(ver. 27.) when there were divers greater kings, and (in comparison of the little spot over which he reigned) a vastly spreading monarchy that still overtopped him all his time, (as the same and successive monarchies did his successors;) or that it was intended of the secular glory and stability of his throne and family; that God would make them to endure for ever, and be as the days of heaven; that they should be as the sun before him, and be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. ver. 29. 37.

That God himself meant it not so, experience and the event of things hath shown; and that these predictions cannot otherwise have had their accomplishment than in the succession of the spiritual and everlasting kingdom of the Messiah (whom God raised up out of his loins to sit on his throne Act. 2. 30) unto his temporal kingdom. Wherein it is there

fore ended by perfection rather than corruption. These prophecies being then made good, not in the kind which they literally imported, but in another (far more noble) kind. In which sense God's covenant with him must be understood, which he insists on so much in this psalm, (ver. 28.—34.) even unto that degree, as to challenge God upon it, as if in the present course of his providence he were now about to make it void: ver.39. though he sufficiently expresses his confidence both before and after, that this could never be. But it is plain it hath been made void long enough ago, in the subversion of David's kingdom, and in that we see his throne and family not been established for ever, not endured as the days of heaven; if those words had no other than their obvious and literal meaning. And if any to clear the truth of God, would allege the wickedness of his posterity, first making a breach and disobliging him, this is prevented by what we find inserted in reference to this very case: If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, &c. Then will I visit their iniquity with the rod, &c. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips, ver. 30—34. All which is solemnly sealed up with this, Once have I sworn in my holiness, that I will not lie unto David, ver 35. So that, they that will make a scruple to accuse the Holy Ghost of falsehood, in that which with so much solemnity he hath promised and sworn, must not make any to admit his further intendment in these words. And that he had a further (even a mystical and spiritual) intendment in this covenant with David, is yet more fully evident from that of the prophet Isaiah; Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, &c. Incline your ear and come unto me. And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander, &c. Isa. 55. 1—5. What means this universal invitation to all thirsty persons, with the subjoined encouragement of making with them an everlasting covenant, (the same which we have here, no doubt, as to the principal parts, and which we find him mentioning also, 2 Sam. 23. 5. with characters exactly corresponding to these of the prophet,) even the sure mercies of David? The meaning sure could not be, that they should be all secular kings and princes, and their posterity after them for ever; which we see is the verbal sound and tenour of this covenant.

And now since it is evident God intended a mystery in this covenant, we may be as well assured he intended no deceit, and that he designed not a delusion to David by the vision in which

he gave it. Can we think he went about to gratify him with a solemn fiction, and draw him into a false and fanciful faith; or so to hide his meaning from him, as to tempt him into the belief of what he never meant? And to what purpose was this so special revelation by vision, if it were not to be understood truly, at least, if not yet perfectly and fully? It is left us therefore to collect that David was not wholly uninstructed how to refer all this to the kingdom of the Messiah. And he hath given sufficient testimony in that part of sacred writ, whereof God used him as a pen-man, that he was of another temper than to place the sum and chief of his expectations and consolations in his own and his posterities' worldly greatness. And to put us out of doubt, our Saviour, (who well knew his spirit) expressly enough tells us, that he in spirit called him Lord, Matt. 22. 43. when he said, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy foot-stool, Psal. 110. 1. A plain discovery how he understood God's revelation touching the future concernments of his kingdom (and the covenant relating thereto,) namely, as a figure and type of Christ's, who must reign till all his enemies be subdued. Nor was he in that ignorance about the nature and design of Christ's kingdom, but that he understood its reference to another world, and state of things, even beyond all the successions of time, and the mortal race of men; so as to have his eye fixed upon the happy eternity which a joyful resurrection must introduce, and whereof Christ's resurrection should be the great and most assuring pledge. And of this we need no fuller an evidence than the express words of the apostle Peter, (Act. 2. ver. 25. &c.) who after he had cited those lofty triumphant strains of David, Psal. 16. 8.—11. I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (or in the state of darkness,) neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life. In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. All which, he tells us, (ver. 25.) was spoken concerning Christ. He more expressly subjoins, (ver. 30.) that David being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ; (ver. 31.) it appears he spake not at random, but as knowing and seeing before what he spake, that his soul was not left in hell: &c. nor can we think he thus rejoices, in another's resurrection, forgetting his own.

And yet we have a further evidence from the apostle Paul,

who affirms, that the promise made to the fathers, God had fulfilled to their children, in that he had raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption; he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Act. 13. 32.—34. Which it is now apparent, must be understood of eternal mercies; such as Christ's resurrection and triumph over the grave doth ensure to us. He therefore looked upon what was spoken concerning his kingdom here, as spoken ultimately of Christ's, the kingdom whereby he governs and conducts his faithful subjects through all the troubles of life and terrors of death (through both whereof he himself as their king and leader hath shewn the way) unto eternal blessedness; and upon the covenant made with him as the covenant of God in Christ, concerning that blessedness and the requisites thereto. And (to say no more in this argument) how otherwise can we conceive he should have that fulness of consolation in this covenant when he lay a-dying, as we find him expressing, 2 Sam. 23. 5. (for these were some of the last words of David, as we see verse. 1.) He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire. What so great joy and solace could a dying man take in a covenant made with him, when he had done with this world, and was to expect no more in it, if he took it not to concern a future blessedness in another world? Was it only for the hoped prosperity of his house and family when he was gone? This (which is the only thing we can fasten on) he plainly secludes in the next words,—although he make it not to grow. Therefore it was his reflection upon those loving-kindnesses mentioned in the former part of the psalm, contained in God's covenant, and confirmed by his oath, but understood according to the sense and import already declared, that caused this sudden turn in David's spirit; and made him that lately spoke as out of a Golgotha, as if he had nothing but death in his eye and thoughts, to speak now in so different a strain, and (after some additional pleadings, in which his faith further recovers itself) to conclude this psalm with solemn praise; Blessed be the Lord for evermore, Amen and Amen.

We see then the contemplation of his own and all men's mortality, abstractly and alone considered, clothed his soul with black, wrapped it up in gloomy darkness, makes the whole kind of human creatures seem to him an obscure shadow, an empty vanity: but his recalling into his thoughts a succeeding state of immortal life, clears up the day, makes him and all things appear in another hue, gives a fair account why such a creature

as man was made; and therein makes the whole frame of things in this inferior world look with a comely and well-composed aspect, as the product of a wise and rational design. Whence therefore we have this ground of discourse fairly before us in the words themselves:—that the short time of man on earth, limited by a certain unavoidable death, if we consider it abstractly by itself, without respect to a future state, carries that appearance and aspect with it, as if God had made all men in vain.—That is said to be vain, according to the importance of the word שוא here used, which is either false, a fiction, an appearance only, a shadow, or evanid thing; or which is useless, unprofitable, and to no valuable purpose. The life of man, in the case now supposed, may be truly stiled vain, either way. And we shall say somewhat to each; but to the former more briefly.

I. It were vain, that is, little other than a shew, a mere shadow, a semblance of being. We must indeed, in the present case, even abstract him from himself, and consider him only as a mortal, dying thing; and as to that of him which is so, what a contemptible nothing is he! There is an appearance of somewhat; but search a little, and inquire into it, and it vanishes into a mere nothing, is found a lie, a piece of falsehood, as if he did but feign a being, and were not. And so we may suppose the Psalmist speaking, upon the view of his own and the common case of man, how fast all were hastening out of life, and laying down the being which they rather seemed to have assumed and borrowed, than to possess and own: Lord, why hast thou made man such a fictitious thing, given him such a mock-being? Why hast thou brought forth into the light of this world such a sort of creatures, that rather seem to be than are; that have so little of solid and substantial being, and so little deserve to be taken for realities; that only serve to cheat one another into an opinion of their true existence, and presently vanish and confess their falsehood? What hovering shadows, what uncertain entities are they? In a moment they are and are not, I know not when to say I have seen a man. It seems as if there were some such things before my eyes; I persuade myself that I see them move and walk to and fro, that I talk and converse with them: but instantly my own sense is ready to give my sense the lie. They are on the sudden dwindled away, and force me almost to acknowledge a delusion. I am but mocked with a shew; and what seemed a reality, proves an imposture. Their pretence to being, is but fiction and falsehood, a cozenage of over-credulous, unwary sense. They only personate what they are thought to be, and quickly put off their very selves as a disguise. This is agreeable to the language of

Scripture elsewhere, Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie, &c. Psal. 62. 9. In two respects may the present state of man seem to approach near to nothingness, and so admit this rhetorication of the Psalmist, as if he were in this sense a vain thing, a figment, or a lie, namely, in respect of the—*minuteness*, and—*instability* of this, his material and perishable being.

First. The minuteness, the small portion or degree of being which this mortal part of man hath in it. It is truly said of all created things, Their *non-esse* is more than their *esse*, that is, they have more *no-being than being*. It is only some limited portion that they have, but there is an infinitude of being which they have not. And so coming infinitely nearer to nothingness than fulness of being, they may well enough wear the name of *nothing*. Wherefore the first and fountain-being justly appropriates to himself the name, I am; yea, tells us, He is, and there is none besides him; therein leaving no other name than that of *nothing* unto creatures. And how much more may this be said of the material and mortal part, this outside of man, whatever of him is obnoxious to death and the grave? Which alone (abstractly looked on) is the subject of the Psalmist's present consideration and discourse. By how much any thing hath more of matter, it hath the less of actual essence. Matter being rather a capacity of being, than being itself, or a dark umbrage or shadow of it, actually nothing, but σκιωλον, ψευδος (as are the expressions of a noble philosopher) *a mere semblance, or a lie*. Plotin. En. 2. 1. 6. And it is the language not of philosophers only, but of the Holy Ghost concerning all the nations of men, They are as nothing, less than nothing, and vanity. Isa. 40.17. What a scarcity then, and penury of being, must we suppose in each individual! especially if we look alone upon the outer part, or rather the umbrage or shadow of the man?

Secondly. The instability and fluidness of it. The visible and corporeal being of man hath nothing steady or consistent in it. Consider his exterior frame and composition, he is no time all himself at once. There is a continual defluence and access of parts; so that some account, each climacteric of his age changes his whole fabric. Whence it would follow, that besides his statique individuating principle (from which we are now to abstract) nothing of him remains; he is another thing; the former man is vanished and gone; while he is, he hastens away, and within a little is not. In respect to the duration, as well as the degree of his being, he is next to nothing. He opens his eye, and is not. Job 27. 19. Gone in the twinkling of an eye. There is nothing in him stable enough, to admit a fixed look. So it is with the whole scene of things in this ma-

terial world. As was the true maxim of an ancient, (Heracl.) All things flow, nothing stays; after the manner of a river. The same thing which the apostle's words more elegantly express; The fashion of this world passeth away. 1 Cor. 7. 31. The scheme, the shew, the pageantry of it. He speaks of it but as an appearance, as if he knew not whether to call it something or nothing, it was so near to vanishing into nothing. And therefore he there requires, that the affections which mutual nearness in relation challenges, be as if they were not: that we rejoice in reference to one another, (even most nearly related, as the occasion and scope of his discourse teach us to understand him) but as if we rejoiced not, and to weep, as if we wept not. Which implies, the objects merit no more, and are themselves, as if they were not. Whence therefore a continued course of intense passion were very incongruous towards so discontinuing things. And the whole state of man being but a shew, the pomp and glittering of the greatest men, make the most splendid and and conspicuous part of it: yet all this we find is not otherwise reckoned of, than an image, a dream, a vision of the night; every man at his best state is altogether vanity, walketh in a vain shew, disquieteth himself in vain, &c. Of all without exception it is pronounced, Man is like to vanity, his days are as a shadow that passeth away. As Ecclesiastes often, of all sublunary things, vanity of vanities, &c. Job 20. 7, 8, 9. Psal. 73. 20.—39. 5, 6.

II. But yet there is another notion of *vain*, as it signifies *useless*, unprofitable, or to no purpose. And in this sense also, if we consider the universal mortality of mankind without respect to a future state, there was a specious ground for the expostulation, Why hast thou made all men in vain? Vanity in the former notion speaks the emptiness of a thing, absolutely and in itself considered; in this latter relatively, as it is referred to, and measured by an end. That is, in this sense, vain, which serves to no end; or to no worthy and valuable end, which amounts to the same. For inasmuch as all ends, except the last, are means also to a further end; if the end immediately aimed at be vain and worthless, that which is referred to it, as it is so referred, cannot but be also vain. Whereupon now let us make trial what end we could in this case think man made for. Which will best be done by taking some view,—of his nature, and—of the ends for which, upon that supposition, we must suppose him made.

First. Of the former (neglecting the strictness of philosophical disquisition) no more is intended to be said than may comport with the design of a popular discourse. And it shall suffice therefore, only to take notice of what is more obvious in the nature of man, and subservient to the present purpose. And

yet we are here to look further than the mere surface and outside of man, which we only considered before; and to view his nature, as it is in itself; and not as the supposition of its having nothing but what is mortal belonging to it, would make it: for as the exility (and almost nothingness) of man's being considered according to that supposition, did best serve to express the vanity of it, in the former notion that hath been given of a vain thing: so the excellency, and solid substantiality of it, considered as it is in itself, will conduce most to the discovery of its vanity in this latter notion thereof. That is, if we first consider that, and then the supposition of such a creature's being only made to perish. And if what shall be said herein, do, in the sequel, tend to destroy that above-mentioned disposition, (as it, being established, would destroy the prime glory of human nature) it can only be said *magna est veritas, &c. truth is great, &c.* In the mean time we may take a view, in the nature of man;

1. Of his intellective powers. Hereby he frames notions of things, even of such things as are above the sphere of sense; of moral good and evil, right and wrong, what is virtuous and what is vicious; of abstract and universal natures. Yea, and of a first being, and cause, and of the wisdom, power, goodness, and other perfections, which must primarily agree to him. Hereby he affirms and denies one thing of another, as he observes them to agree and disagree, and discerns the truth and falsehood of what is spoken or denied. He doth hereby infer one thing from another, and argue himself into firm and unwavering assent to many things, not only above the discovery of sense, but directly contrary to their sensible appearances.

2. His power of determining himself, of choosing and refusing, according as things are estimated, and do appear to him. Where also it is evident how far the objects which this faculty is sometimes exercised about, do transcend the reach of all sensible nature; as well as the peculiar nobleness and excellency is remarkable of the faculty itself. It hath often for its object, things of the highest nature, purely spiritual and divine, virtue, religion, God himself. So as that these (the faculty being repaired only by sanctifying grace, not now first put into the nature of man) are chosen by some, and, where it is not so, refused (it is true) by the most; but not by a mere not willing of them, (as mere brutal appetite also doth not-will them, which no way reaches the notion of a refusal,) but by rejecting them with a positive aversion and dislike, wherein there is great iniquity and sin; which could not be but in a nature capable of the opposite temper. And it is apparent, this faculty hath the privilege of determining itself, so as to be exempt from the ne-

cessitating influence of any thing foreign to it: upon the supposal whereof, the management of all human affairs, all treaties between man and man, to induce a consent to this or that; the whole frame of government, all legislation and distribution of public justice do depend. For take away this supposition, and these will presently appear most absurd and unjust. With what solemnity are applications and addresses made to the will of man upon all occasions? How is it courted, and solicited, and sued unto? But how absurd were it so to treat the other creatures, that act by a necessity of nature in all they do? to make supplications to the wind, or propound articles to a brute? And how unjust, to determine and inflict severe penalties for unavoidable and necessitated actions and omissions? These things occur to our first notice, upon any (a more sudden and cursory) view of the nature of man. And what should hinder, but we may infer from these, that there is further in his nature;

3. A capacity of an immortal state, that is, that his nature is such, that he may, if God so please, by the concurrent influence of his ordinary power and providence, without the help of a miracle, subsist in another state of life after this, even a state that shall not be liable to that impairment and decay that we find this subject to. More is not (as yet) contended for; and so much methinks none should make a difficulty to admit, from what is evidently found in him. For it may well be supposed, that the admitting of this (at least) will seem much more easy to any free and unprejudiced reason, than to ascribe the operations before instanced in, to alterable or perishable matter, or indeed to any matter at all. It being justly presumed, that none will ascribe to matter, as such, the powers of ratiocination or volition. For then every particle of matter must needs be rational and intelligent, (a high advance to what one would never have thought at all active.) And how unconceivable is it, that the minute particles of matter, in themselves, each of them destitute of any such powers, should by their mutual intercourse with one another, become furnished with them! That they should be able to understand, deliberate, resolve, and choose, being assembled and duly disposed in counsel together: but, apart, rest all in a deep and sluggish silence! Besides, if the particles of matter howsoever modified and moved, to the utmost subtilty or tenuity, and to the highest vigour, shall then become intelligent and rational, how is it that we observe not, as any matter is more subtil and more swiftly and vigorously moved, it makes not a discernably nearer approach (proportionably) to the faculty and power of reasoning? And that nothing more of an aptitude or tendency towards intelligence and wisdom is to be perceived in an aspiring flame or a brisk wind, than in a clod or a

stone? If to understand, to define, to distinguish, to syllogize, be nothing else but the agitation and collision of the minute parts a rarified matter among one another; methinks, some happy chemist or other, when he hath missed his designed mark, should have hit upon some such more noble product, and by one other prosperous sublimation have caused some temporary resemblance (at least) of these operations. Or, if the paths of nature, in these affairs of the mind, be more abstruse, and quite out of the reach and road of artificial achievement, whence is it, that nature herself (that is vainly enough supposed by some to have been so happy, as by some casual strokes to have fabricated the first of human creatures, that have since propagated themselves) is grown so effete and dull, as never since to hit upon any like effect in the like way: and that no records of any time or age give us the notice of some such creature sprung out of some epicurean womb of the earth, and elaborated by the only immediate hand of nature, so disposing the parts of matter in its constitution, that it should be able to perform the operation belonging to the mind of man. But if we cannot, with any tolerable pretence or shew of reason, attribute these operations to any mere matter, that there must be somewhat else in man to which they may agree, that is distinct from his corruptible part, and that is therefore capable, by the advantage of its own nature, of subsisting hereafter, (while God shall continue to it an influence agreeable to its nature, as he doth to other creatures.) And hence it seems a modest and sober deduction, that there is in the nature of man, at least, a capacity of an immortal state.

Secondly, Now, if we yet suppose there is actually no such state for man hereafter, It is our next business to view the ends for which, upon that supposition, he may be thought to have been made. Whence we shall soon see, there is not any of them whereof it may be said, this is what he was created for, as his adequate end. And here we have a double agent to be accommodated with a suitable end;—Man now made: and—God who made him.

1. Man himself. For it must be considered, that inasmuch as man is a creature capable of propounding to himself an end, and of acting knowingly and with design towards it, (and indeed uncapable of acting otherwise as a man,) it would therefore not be reasonable to speak of him, in this discourse, as if he were merely passive, and to be acted only by another: but we must reckon him obliged, in subordination to his Maker, to intend and pursue (himself) the proper end for which he appointed and made him. And in reason we are to expect that what God hath appointed to be his proper end, should be such as is in itself most highly desirable, suitable to the utmost capa-

city of his nature, and attainable by his action; so carrying with it sufficient inducements, both of desire and hope, to a vigorous and rational prosecution of it. Thus we must, at least, conceive it to have been in the primitive institution of man's end, unto which the expostulation hath reference,—Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? And we can think of no ends which men either do or ought to propound to themselves, but by the direction of one of these principles, sense, reason, or religion.

(1.) Sense is actually the great dictator to the most of men, and *de facto, in fact*, determines them to the mark and scope which they pursue, and animates the whole pursuit. Not that sense is by itself capable of designing an end, but it too generally inclines and biasses reason herein. So that reason hath no other hand in the business, than only as a slave to sense, to form the design and contrive the methods which may most conduce to it, for the gratification of sensual appetite and inclination at last. And the appetitions of sense (wherein it hath so much mastery and dominion) are but such as we find enumerated, 1 John 2. 16. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life. Or (if we understand the apostle to use the name of lust objectively) the objects sufficiently connote the appetitions themselves. All which may fitly be referred to sense: either the outward senses, or the fancy or imagination, which as deservedly comes under the same common denomination.

Now, who can think the satisfying of these lusts the commensurate end of man? Who would not, upon the supposition of no higher, say with the Psalmist, Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? To what purpose was it for him to live in the world a few years, upon this account only, and so go down to the place of silence? What is there in the momentary satisfaction of this mortal flesh; in his pleasing view of a mass of treasure, (which he never brought with him into the world, but only heaped together, and so leaves not the world richer or poorer than he found it,) what is there in the applause and admiration of fools (as the greater part always are,) that we should think it worth the while for man to have lived for these things? If the question were put, Wherefore did God make man? who would not be ashamed so to answer it, He made him to eat, and drink, and take his pleasure, to gather up wealth for he knows not who; to use his inventions, that each one may become a talk and wonder to the rest; and then when he hath fetched a few turns upon the theatre, and entertained the eyes of beholders with a short scene of impertinencies, descend and never be heard of more? What, that he should come into the world furnished with such powers and endowments for this? It were a like case, as if one should be clad in scarlet to go to

plough, or curiously instructed in arts and sciences to tend hogs.

(2.) If we rise higher, to the view of such ends as more refined reason may propose, within the compass only of this present state: we will suppose that it be either, the acquisition of much knowledge, the furnishing his understanding with store of choice and well-digested notions; that he may please himself in being (or in having men think him) a learned wight. Death robs away all his gain. And what is the world the better? How little shall he enrich the clods, among which he must shortly lie down and have his abode? Or how little is the gain, when the labour and travail of so many years are all vanished and blown away with the last puff of his dying breath, and the fruit that remains, is to have it said by those that survive, "There lies learned dust?" That any part of his acquisitions, in that kind, descends to others, little betters the case, when they that succeed are all hastening down also into the same ignoble dust. Besides, that the increase of sorrow, both because the objects of knowledge do but increase the more he knows do multiply the more upon him, so as to beget a despair of ever knowing so much as he shall know himself to be ignorant of; and a thousand doubts, about things he hath more deeply considered which his confident (undiscovered) ignorance never dreamt of or suspected. And thence an unquietness an irresolution of mind, which they that never drove at any such mark are (more contentedly) unacquainted with. And also, because that by how much knowledge hath refined a man's soul, so much it is more sensible and perceptive of troublesome impressions from the disorderly state of things in the world; which they that converse only with earth and dirt, have not spirits clarified and fine enough to receive. So that, except a man's knowing more than others were to be referred to another state, the labour of attaining thereto, and other accessory disadvantages, would hardly ever be compensated by the fruit or pleasure of it. And unless a man would suppose himself made for torment, he would be shrewdly tempted to think a quiet and drowsy ignorance a happier state.

Or if that a man's reason, with a peculiarity of temper, guide him to an active negotiating life, rather than that of contemplation; and determine him to the endeavour of serving mankind, or the community to which he belongs: by how much the worthier actions he performs, and by how much more he hath perfected and accomplished himself with parts and promptitude for such actions; the loss and vanity is but the greater thereby, since he and those he affected to serve, are all going down to the silent grave. Of how little use are the politician, the statesman, the senator, the judge, or the eloquent man, if we lay

aside the consideration of their subserviency to the keeping the world in a more composed and orderly state, for the prosecution of the great designs of eternity, when ere long all their thoughts shall perish? what matter were it what became of the world, whether it be wise or foolish, rich or poor, quiet or unquiet, governed or ungoverned? Whoever should make their order and tranquillity their study, or that should intend their thoughts and endeavours to the finding out the exactest methods and rules of government and policy, should but do as they that should use a great deal of pains and art in the curious adorning and trimming up of a dying person; or as if some one, among many condemned persons, should be very solicitous to have them march with him in very exact order to the place of execution. If the world be not looked upon as an attiring room to dress one's self in, for an appearance on the eternal stage; but only as a great charnel-house, where they undress and put off themselves, to sleep in everlasting darkness; how can we think it worth a thought, or to be the subject of any rational design or care? Who would not rather bless himself in a more rational neglect and regardlessness of all human affairs; and account an unconcerned indifferency the highest wisdom? Yea

(3.) If we suppose *religion* (which we need not because it is mentioned in this order conceive exclusive of reason, but rather perfective of it: for reason having first found out God, religion adores him) to become with any the ruling principle, and to have the direction and government of the man, as to his way and end: how would even that languish with the best, were the consideration of a future state laid aside, which with so few, notwithstanding it, hath any efficacy at all to command and govern their lives? Religion terminates upon God; and upon him under a double notion, either as we design service and honour to him, or as from him we design satisfaction and blessedness to ourselves. Now if a man's thoughts and the intention of his mind be carried towards God under the former notion, how great an allay and abatement must it needs be to the vigour and zeal of his affection, who shall with the most sincere devotedness apply himself to serve his interest and glory, to reflect upon the universal mortality of himself and mankind, without any hope of compensation to it by a future immortality?

It is agreed on all hands, that the utmost contributions of creatures can add nothing to him: and that our glorifying him doth only consist, either in our acknowledging him glorious ourselves, or representing him so to others. But how little doth it signify, and how flat and low a thing would it seem, that I should only turn mine eye upwards and think a few admiring thoughts of God this hour, while I apprehend myself liable to lose my very thinking power and whole being the next?

Or if we could spread his just renown, and gain all the sons of men to a concurrence with us in the adoring of his sovereign excellencies, how would it damp and stifle such loyal and dutiful affection, to consider, that the universal testimony, so deservedly given him, shall shortly cease for ever, and that infinitely blessed Being be ere long (again, as he was from eternity before) the only witness of his own glory? And if the propension of a man's soul be towards God under the latter notion also, in order to a satisfaction that shall thence accrue to himself, (which design, both in the pursuit and execution of it, is so conjunct with the former that it cannot be severred,) it cannot but be an unspeakable diminution and check to the highest delights in this kind, to think how soon they shall have an end; that the darkness and dust of the grave shall shortly obscure and extinguish the glory of this lightsome scene.

To think every time one enters that blessed presence, for ought I know I shall approach it no more! This is possibly my last sight of that pleasant face, my last taste of those enravishing pleasures! What bitterness must this infuse into the most delicious sweetness our state could then admit! And by how much more free and large grace should be in its present communications, and by how much any soul should be more experienced in the life of God and inured to divine delights, so much the more grievous and afflictive resentments it could not but have of the approaching end of all; and be the more powerfully tempted to say, Lord, why was I made in vain? How faint and languid would endeavours be after the knowledge of that God whom I may but only know and die? How impotent and ineffectual would the attractions of this end be to man in this terrene state to raise him above the world, and rescue him from the power of sensible things, to engage him in the pursuit of that sanctity and purity which alone can qualify him for converse with God, to bear him out in a conflict against the (more natural) inclinations of sense, when if with much labour and painful striving, much self-denial and severity to the flesh, any disposition should be attained to relish divine pleasures, it be considered all the while, that the end of all may be as soon lost as it is gained; and that possibly there may be no more than a moment's pleasure to recompence the pains and conflicts of many years? Although, in this case, the continual hope and expectation of some farther manifestation and fruition might much influence a person already holy, and a great lover of God, unto a stedfast adherence to him; yet how little would it do to make men such, that are yet unsuitable and disaffected to him? or even to recover such out of their lapses and drowsy fits, that are not altogether so?

And it is further to be considered, that since God hath given man a being capable of subsisting in another state, (as doth appear by what hath been already said;) and since he is therefore capable of enjoying a greater happiness than his present state can admit of; that capacity will draw upon him a most indispensable obligation to intend that happiness as his end. For admit that there be no future state for him, it is however impossible any man should know there is none; and upon an impartial view of the whole case, he hath enough to render it (at least) far more likely to him that there is. And certainly he cannot but be obliged to pursue the highest good (even by the law of nature itself) which his nature is capable of; which probably he may attain, and which he is nowhere forbidden by his Creator to aspire unto. Whence therefore, if we now circumscribe him within the limits of this present mortal state; or if, for argument's sake, we suppose eventually there is no other; we must not only confess that capacity to be given him in vain, but that he is obliged also to employ the principal endeavours of his life and all his powers in vain, (for certainly his principal endeavour ought to be laid out in order to his principal end;) that is, to pursue that good which he may attain, but never shall; and which is possible to him, but not upon any terms future. And if it be admitted, that the subject state of man must silence all objections against any such inconsistencies, and make him content to act in pure obedience to his Maker (whether he signify his will by the law of nature only, or by any positive precept,) though he shall not hereafter enjoy any permanent state of blessedness as the consequent reward: that virtue and goodness, a holy rectitude of inclinations and actions, are reward enough to themselves: that there is that justice and sweetness in religion, to oblige him to love and reverence and adore the divine Majesty this moment, though he were sure to perish for ever and be reduced to nothing the next. I say, admitting all this; yet,

2. Since the blessed God himself is to be considered as the principal Agent and Designer in this inquiry "Why hast thou made all men in vain?" It is with modest and humble reverence to be considered, What end worthy of that infinitely perfect Being, he may be supposed to have propounded to himself in forming such a creature of so improvable a nature, and furnished with so noble faculties and powers, for so transient and temporary a state: and how well it will consist with the most obvious and unquestionable notions we can have of an absolutely perfect Being and the attributes which he most peculiarly challenges and appropriates to himself, (so as not only to own, but to glory in them,) that he should give being not to some

few only, but to the whole species of human creatures, and therein communicate to them a nature capable of knowing, of loving and enjoying himself in a blessed eternity, with a design to continue them only for some short space on earth, in a low imperfect state, wherein they shall be liable to sink still lower, to the vilest debasement of their natures; and yet not for their transgression herein, (for it is the mortality of man, not by sin, but by creation or the design of the Creator only, that is now supposed,) but for his mere pleasure to bereave them of being, and reduce them all again to nothing? It is to be considered, Whether, thus to resolve and do, can any way agree to God, according to our clearest and most assured conceptions of him; not from our reasoning only, but his discovery of himself. For otherwise we see the imputation falls where we should dread to let it rest, of having made man in vain.

He is, in common account, said to act vainly, who acts beneath himself, so as to pursue an end altogether unworthy of him, or none at all. It is true, that some single acts may be done by great persons as a divertisement, without dishonourable reflection, that may seem much beneath them. And if any do stoop to very mean offices and employments to do good, to help the distressed and relieve the miserable, it is a glorious acquest; and the greater they are, the higher is the glory of their condescending goodness. Benignity of nature and a propension to the most unexpected acts of a merciful self-depression, when the case may require it, are the most comely ornaments of princely greatness, and out-shine the glory of the richest diadem. But a wonted habitual course of mean actions in great persons, that speak a low design or no design at all, but either a humour to trifle, or a mischievous nature and disposition, would never fail to be thought inglorious and infamous; as may be seen in the instances of Sardanapalu's spinning, and Domitian's killing of flies.

When wisdom and goodness are in conjunction with power and greatness, they never persuade a descent but upon such terms and for such purposes that a more glorious advancement shall ensue. Wisdom forseeing that end, and goodness readily taking the way, which (though it were most undesigned, or not aimed at as an end) could not fail to effect it. Nor are any attributes of the Divine Being more conspicuous than these; more testified by himself, or more generally acknowledged by all men that have not denied his existence. Or if any have done that violence to their own minds, as to erase and blot out thence the belief of an existing Deity, yet at least, while they deny it, they cannot but have this notion of what they deny, and grant that these are great perfections, and must agree to God, upon supposition

that he do exist. If therefore he should do any thing repugnant to these, or we should suppose him to do so, we should therein suppose him to act below a God, and so as were very unworthy of him. And though it becomes us to be very diffident of our own reasonings concerning the counsels and designs of that eternal Being; so as if we should find him to assert any thing expressly of himself, which we know not how to reconcile with our own preconceived thoughts, therein to yield him the cause, and confess the debility of our understandings: yet certainly, it were great rashness and void of all pretence, to suppose any thing which neither he saith of himself; nor we know how, consistently, to think. Nor are we, in judging of his designs, to bring him down to our model, or measure him by man, whose designs do for the most part bespeak only his own indigency, and are levelled at his own advantage and the bettering some way or other of his present condition. Whatsoever the great God doth towards his creatures, we must understand him to do, though with design, yet from an exuberant fulness of life and being, by which he is uncapable of an accession to himself. And hence that he can in reference to himself have no other inducement to such action, besides the complacency which he takes in diffusing his free communications, (for he exercises loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the in the earth, because he delighteth in these things, Jer. 9. 24.) and the maintaining the just honour and reputation of his government over his creatures, who as they are of him, and through him, must be all to him, that he may have glory for ever. Rom. 11. 36.

Now though it be most undoubtedly true, that the sovereignty of his power and dominion over his creatures (of which he hath no need, and to whom he so freely gave being) is so absolute and unlimited, that if we consider that only, we must acknowledge, he might create a man or an angel and annihilate him presently; yea, that he might, if he so pleased, raise up many thousand worlds of intelligent and innocent creatures into being in one moment, and throw them into nothing again the very next moment. Yet how unwarrantably should we maim the notion of God, if we should conceive of him only according to one attribute, secluding the consideration of the rest? How misshapen an idea should we bear of him in our minds? And how would it deform the face of providence, and spoil the decorum of his administrations, if they should be the effects of one single attribute only, the other having no influence on the affairs of the world? If nothing but *mercy* should appear in his dispensations towards sinful man, so that every man might do what were good in his own eyes, without cause of fear to be called to account; if the most dissolute and prophane were equally as-

sured of his favour, with those who are most holy and strictly regular in all their conversation, what would be thought of God and religion? Or how should we savour the notion of an impure deity, taking pleasure to indulge the wickedness of men? And if *justice* alone have the whole management of affairs, and every act of sin be followed with an act of sudden vengeance, and the whole world become a flaming theatre, and all men held in a hopeless expectation of fiery indignation and of judgment without mercy, what would become of that amiable representation, and the consolatory thoughts we have of God, and of that love and duty which some souls do bear towards him? Or if *power* should affect daily to shew itself in unusual appearances and effects, in changing every hour the shapes of the terrestrial creatures, in perpetual quick innovations, of the courses of the celestial, with a thousand more kinds of prodigious events that might be the hourly effects of unlimited power, how were the order of the world disturbed, and how unlovely an idea would it beget in every intelligent creature, of him that made and rules it? Yet it is from no defect of *mercy*, that all men are not equally favoured and blessed of God; nor of *justice* that a speedy vengeance is not taken of all; nor of *power*, that the world is not filled with astonishing wonders every day; but rather from their unexcessiveness, and that they make that blessed temperature where they reside, and are exercised in so exact proportion, that nothing is ever done unworthy of him, who is, at once, both perfectly merciful, and just, and powerful, and wise, and hath all perfections eminently comprehended and united in his own most simple Being. It were therefore besides the purpose to insist only what sovereign power, considered apart, might do; but we are to consider what may be congruous to him to do, who is infinitely wise and good, as well as powerful, And

(1.) Let it be weighed, how it may square with the divine wisdom, to give being to a world of reasonable creatures, and giving them only a short time of abode in being, to abandon them to a perpetual annihilation. Wisdom in any agent must needs suppose the intention of some valuable end of his action. And the divine wisdom, wherein it hath any end diverse from that which his pure goodness and benignity towards his creatures would incline him to, (which also we must conceive it most intent to promote and further,) cannot but have it chiefly in design; it being determined that his goodness should open itself and break forth into a creation, and that of reasonable creatures, so to manage his government over these, (which indeed are the only subjects of government in the strict and proper notion of it,) as may most preserve his authority, and keep up his just interest in them, both by recommending him to their fear and

love; to possess them with that due and necessary reverence of him that may restrain them from contemptuous sinning; and so endear his government to them, as to engage them to a placid and free obedience. But how little would it agree with this design of the divine wisdom, to have made man only for this temporary state? For,

[1.] How little would it tend to the begetting and settling that fear of God in the hearts of men, that were necessary to preserve his authority and government from a prophane contempt; whereas daily experience shews, that there is now no difference made between them that fear God and them that fear him not, unless wherein the former are worse dealt with and more exposed to sufferings and wrongs: that, at least, it is often (yea for the most part) so, that to depart from iniquity is to make one's self a prey; that those who profess and evidence the most entire devotedness to God, and pay the greatest observance and duty to him, become a common scorn upon this very account, and are in continual danger to be eaten up as bread by those that call not upon God; while in the mean time the tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure, are not plagued as other men, nor in trouble as other men. And judgment is not here executed for wicked works in this world. If also nothing is to be expected, either of good or evil, in another, who is likely to be induced, in this case, to fear God or to be subject to him? And how unlike is this to the wisdom of the supreme Ruler, to expose his most rightful and sovereign authority to the fearless and insolent affronts of his own revolted creatures, without any design of future reparation to it; as if he had created them on purpose, only to curse him and die? But he hath prevented the occasion of so reproachful a censure, and thought fit to fill his word and the consciences of guilty sinners with threats and dreadful presages of a future judgment and state of punishment. To which he is no less concerned, both in point of wisdom and veracity, (and I may add of legal justice,) to make the event correspond, that he may neither be found to have omitted any due course for preventing or redress of so great an evil; and that, if the threatening do not effectually over-awe sinners, the execution may at least right himself: and that, in the mean time, he do not (that which would least of all become him, and which were most repugnant to his nature) make use of a solemn fiction to keep the world in order, and maintain his government by falsehood and deceit, that is, by threatening what he knows shall never be.

[2.] Nor were there (in the case all along supposed) a more probable provision made, to conciliate and procure to the Divine Majesty the love which it is requisite he should have from the

children of men. And this cannot but be thought another apt method for his wisdom to pitch upon, to render his government acceptable, and to engage men to that free and complacential subjection which is suitable to a God. For how can that filial and dutiful affection ever be the genuine product or impress of such a representation of the case between God and them; that is, that they shall be most indispensably obliged to devote their whole being and all their powers entirely to his service and interest; exactly to observe his strictest laws, to keep under the severest restraint their most innate, reluctant inclinations; and in the mean time expect the administrations of providence to be such, towards them, that they shall find harder usage all their days than his most insolent and irreconcilable enemies, and at last lose their very beings, they know not how soon, and therewith (necessarily) all possibilities of any future recompence. Is this a likely way to procure love, and to captivate hearts into an affectionate and free obedience? Or what is it probable to produce, but a sour and sullen despondency, the extinction of all generous affection, and a temper more agreeable to a forced enthralment to some malignant, insulting genius, than a willing subjection to the God of all grace and love? And every one will be ready to say, There is little of wisdom in that government, the administration whereof is neither apt to beget fear nor love in those that are subject to it; but either through the want of the one to be despised, or to be regreted through the want of the other. And this being the very case, upon supposition of no future state, it seems altogether unworthy of the divine wisdom, that such a creature should ever have been made as man, upon which no end is attainable (as the course of providence commonly runs in this world,) in comparison whereof, it were not better and more honourable to his Maker, (whose interest it is the part of his wisdom to consult,) that he had never been. And therefore, as to God and the just and worthy designs of his glory, he would seem, upon this supposition, wholly made in vain. And

(2.) How congruous and agreeable would this supposition prove to the goodness of God? As that other attribute of wisdom doth more especially respect his own interest, so doth this the interest of his creatures: that is, if it be understood, not in a metaphysical, but in a moral sense; as it imports a propensity and steady bent of will unto benefaction, according to that of the Psalmist, Thou art good, and dost good. Psal. 119. 68. And this free and generous principle it is, which gives the first rise and beginning to all the designs any way respecting the well-being and happiness of creatures; which, then infinite wisdom forms and manages to their full issues

and accomplishment, guiding (as it were) the hand of almighty power in the execution of them.

That there should be a creation, we may conceive to be the first dictate of this immense goodness, which afterwards diffuses itself through the whole, in communications agreeable to the nature of every creature. So that even this inferior and less noble part, the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. Psal. 33. 5. It creates first its own object, and then pours forth itself upon it with infinite delight, rewarding the expence with the pleasure of doing good. Now if we should suppose such a creature as man made only for that short time and low state which we see to be allotted him in this world, It were neither difficult nor enough to reconcile the hypothesis with strict justice, which upon the ground of absolute dominion, may do what it will with its own: but the ill accord it seems to have with so large and abounding goodness, renders it very unlike the dispensation of the blessed God; no enjoyment being in that case afforded to this sort of creatures, agreeable to their common nature and capacity, either in degree or continuance.

Not in *degree:* for who sees not, that the nature of man is capable of greater things than he here enjoys? And where that capacity is rescued from the corruption that narrows and debases it, how sensibly do holy souls resent and bewail their present state, as a state of imperfection? With how fervent and vehement desires and groans do they aspire and pant after a higher and more perfect? We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed,; 2 Cor. 5. 4. (that is not enough, to be delivered out of the miseries of life, by laying down this passive part, is not that which will terminate their desires,) but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Theirs are not brutal groans, the complaint of oppressed sensitive nature under a present evil; but rational and spiritual, the expressions of desire strongly carried to pursue an apprehended suitable good. The truest notion we can yet have of the primitive nature and capacity of man, is by beholding it in its gradual restitution. And is it agreeable to the goodness of God, to put such a nature into any, and with-hold the suitable object? As if it were a pleasure to him, to behold the work of his own hands spending itself in weary strugglings towards him, and vexed all the while it continues in being, with the desire of what it shall never enjoy; and which he hath made it desire, and therein encouraged it to expect?

Nor in *continuance:* for I suppose it already evident, that the nature of man is capable (in respect of his principal part) of perpetuity, and so of enjoying a felicity hereafter that shall be permanent and know no end. And it seems no way congruous

to so large goodness, to stifle a capacity whereof it was itself the author, and destroy its own work. For if the being of man is intended for so short a continuance, either he may have the knowledge of this determination concerning him, or not. If he cannot have the knowledge of it, why should any one say what they cannot know; or put such a thing upon God, that is so vilely reflecting and dishonourable to him? If he may have the knowledge of it, then doth he seem a creature made for torment, while by an easy reflection upon himself he may discern, he is not uncapable of a perpetual state, and is yet brought forth into the light to be ere long extinguished and shut up in everlasting darkness. And who can think this a thing worthy of infinite and eternal goodness? Besides (as hath been insisted before,) that this torture, proceeding from so sad an expectation, cannot but be most grievous and afflictive to the best. Whence the apostle tells us, that christians, if in this life only they had hope, were of all men most miserable: (1. Cor. 15. 19.) so that it were more desirable never to have been. If any yet fall hereafter into a state to which they would prefer perpetual annihilation, inasmuch as it is wholly by their own default, it no way reflects upon divine goodness. But it would be a dishonourable reflection rather upon that Author and Fountain of all goodness, if he should not express himself wise and just as well as good; as it would upon a man, especially a ruler over others, if that which we call good-nature were conjunct with stolidity or an insensibleness of whatsoever affront to his person and government. Upon the whole, therefore, it seems most repugnant to these great attributes of the divine Being, to have made man only for this present state. That to think so, were to conceive unworthily of him, as if he had acted much beneath himself, and done a vain thing in making such a creature, no end being attainable by it, which we can suppose either his wisdom or goodness to aim at.

If any would imagine to themselves an expedient, by supposing an eternal succession of human generations, upon whom the wisdom and goodness of God might have a perpetual exercise in the government and sustentation of them for their appointed times: this would be far from satisfying as to either, but would rather increase the difficulty; for there would be the same temptation upon all the individuals, to contemn or regret the government of their Maker. So that he should hereby even eternize his own reproach; and should always, in every succession, have still the same craving appetites returning, and expectations never to be satisfied, which were as repugnant to all he hath discovered to us of his nature, as any thing we can suppose. Though some persons of a light and desultory humour,

might imagine to themselves a pleasure in it, if they had the power to make such a rotation of things, rising and falling, coming and passing away, at their beck and command; and such as were of a sanguinary temper, might sport themselves in raising up and lopping off lives at pleasure with an arbitrary hand: yet sure they would never gain by it the esteem of being either wise or good; and would, it is like, in time grow weary of the sport. But to form to ourselves such ideas of the blessed God, were an injury not inferior to the very denial of his being.

His providence towards the inferior creatures hath no resemblance of any such thing; whom his bounty sustains agreeably to their natures, who have no foresight of their own cessation from being, to keep them in a continual death by the expectation of it; and who serve to valuable and reasonable purposes while they are continued; for they are useful, partly to the sustentation of man, and partly to his instruction, in order to his higher ends. And though each individual of them do not actually so, it is sufficient that the several kinds of them are naturally apt thereto, which are propagated according to a settled course and law of nature, in their individuals. And if all immediately serve not man, yet they do it mediately, in serving those that more immediately do. Besides, that when such a work was to be done, as the furnishing out and accomplishing this lower world; it was meet all things should be in number, weight, and measure, and correspond in every part. As if one build a house for entertainment, though the more noble rooms only do come in view, yet all the rest are made answerably decent, on supposition that they may. It was becoming the august and great Lord of this world, that it have in it, not only what may sustain the indigent, but gratify the contemplative by fresh variety; who would be apt to grow remiss by conversing only with what were of every days observation. Nor was that a low end, when such contemplation hath so direct a tendency to raise a considering mind to the sight, and love, and praise of the supreme Being, that hath stamped so lively signatures and prints of his own perfections upon all his works. If it be said, man might be in the same kind serviceable to the contemplation of angels, though he were himself never to know any other than this mortal state; it is true that he might so; but yet the incongruities were no way salved, of God's putting a capacity and expectation into his nature of a better state: of his dealing so hardly with them, that he hath procured to love him: of his never vindicating their high contempt that spent their days in rebellion against him. Besides, that these were ill precedents, and no pleasant themes for the view of an angelical mind. And

if they see a nature extinct, capable of their state, what might they suspect of their own? So that, which way soever we turn our thoughts, we still see that man's mortality and liableness to an unavoidable death, abstracted from the thoughts of another state, carry that constant aspect, as if all men were made in vain.

What remains then, but that we conclude hence, we ought not too much, or too long, thus to abstract, nor too closely confine our eye to this dark and gloomy theme, death and the grave, or withhold it from looking further. For far be it from us to think the wise and holy God hath given being to man (and consequently exercised a long continued series of providence through so many successive ages towards him) in vain. Nothing but a prospect of another state can solve the knot and work through the present difficulty, can give us a true account of man and what he was made for. Therefore since it would be prophane and impious, sad and uncomfortable, a blasphemy to our Maker, and a torture to ourselves, to speak it as our settled apprehensions and judgment, that God hath made man to no purpose; we are obliged and concerned, both in justice to him and compassion to ourselves, so to represent the case, as that we may be able to remove so unworthy and black a thought to the greatest distance from us, both in itself and whatsoever practice would be consequent thereto: that is, to conclude, That certainly there must be another state after this, and accordingly steer our course.—The Improvement then of the foregoing discourse will have a double aspect:—on our judgments, and practice.

1. On our judgments, To settle this great principle of truth in them. The certain futurity of another state after this life is over, unto which this present state is only preparatory and introductive. For whereas we can never give a rational account why such a creature as man was made, if we confine all our apprehensions concerning him to his present state on earth: let them once transcend those narrow limits, fly over into eternity and behold him made for an everlasting state hereafter, and the difficulty now vanishes, the whole affair looks with a comely and befitting aspect.

For we may now represent the case thus to ourselves: that man was put into this terrestrial state and dwelling, by the wise and righteous designation of his great Creator and Lord, that his loyalty to him, amidst the temptations and enticements of sensible things, might be tried awhile: that revolting from him, he is only left to feel here the just smart of his causeless defection: that yet such farther methods are used for his recovery, as are most suitable to his so impaired state. An allayed light

shines to him in the midst of darkness, that his feebler eye may receive a gradual illumination, and behold God in those more obscure discoveries which he now vouchsafes of himself, till by degrees he be won to take up good thoughts of him, and return into an acquaintance and friendship with him; which once begun here, shall be hereafter perfected into eternal fruitions. The offence and wrong done to his Maker, he in a strange unthought-of way makes compensation of to himself; and testifies his reconcilableness, and persuades a reconciliation upon such terms, and by so endearing mediums, as might melt and mollify hearts of adamant; and shall effectually prevail with many to yield themselves the subjects and instances of his admired goodness for ever; while others lie only under the natural consequents and just resentments of their unremedied enmity and folly. So are the glorious issues of God's dispensation towards man, and the wise and merciful conduct of his equal government, worthily celebrated through the days of eternity with just acclamations and praises. We can fasten upon nothing exceptionable or unaccountable, yea, or that is not highly laudable and praise-worthy in this course of procedure. Therefore, though now we behold a dark cloud of mortality hanging over the whole human race; though we see the grave still devouring and still unsatisfied, and that all are successively drawn down into it; and we puzzle ourselves to assign a reason why such a creature was made a reasonable being, capable of an everlasting duration, to visit the world only and vanish, to converse a short space with objects and affairs so far beneath it, and retire we know not whither: if yet our eye follow him through the darker paths of the region of death, till at the next appearance we behold him clothed with immortality and fitted to an endless state, the wonder is over, and our amusement quickly ceases.

Wherefore let us thus bethink ourselves, and consider: Surely he that made this great universe, and disposed all the sorts, stations, and motions of creatures in it in so exquisite order and method, cannot but be a most perfectly wise and intellectual agent, and therefore cannot be supposed to have done any thing to no purpose; much less when all the inferior creatures have ends visibly answering the exigency of their natures, to have made so excellent a creature as man (the nobler part of his lower creation) in vain; that he only should be without his proportionable end, and after a short continuance in being, return to nothing, without leaving it conjecturable what he was made for. This were so intolerable an incongruity, and so unlike the footsteps that every-where else appear in the divine wisdom and goodness, that we cannot but inquire further into this matter, and conclude at last; that he was made for some higher purpo-

ses than are within the reach of our sight, and hath his principal part yet to act upon another stage, within the vail, that shall never be taken down. The future immortality of man seems therefore so certainly grounded upon what is discovered and generally acknowledged touching the nature of God and his most peculiar and essential perfections, that unless we were further put to prove the existence of a God, (which to them that are rational need not, and to them that are not were in vain,) there can no reasonable doubt remain concerning it.

2. Wherefore the further use we have to make of the matter proposed, is in reference to our practice: which it may fitly serve both to correct and reprove, and also to direct and guide.

(1.) It administers the ground of just *rebuke*: that since, if we terminate our thoughts and designs upon things only on this side the grave, it would seem we were wholly made in vain; and we do yet so generally employ our cares and endeavours about such things, and even the vilest and most despicable of these; and so live not to our own dishonour only, but to the reproach of our Maker, as if he made us for no more worthy ends. And let us but impartially debate the matter with ourselves; Can we, in sober reason, think we were made only for such ends as most men only pursue? have we any pretence to think so? or can it enter into our souls to believe it? Would not men be ashamed to profess such a belief; or to have it written in their foreheads, these are the only ends they are capable of? Then might one read, such a man born to put others in mind of his predecessor's name, and only lest such a family should want an heir: such a one to consume such an estate, and devour the provenue of so many farms and manors: such a one to fill so many bags and coffers to sustain the riot of him that succeeds: some created to see and make sport; to run after hawks and dogs, or spend the time which their weariness redeems from converse with brutes, in making themselves such, by drinking away the little residue of wit and reason they have left; mixing with this genteel exercise, their impure and scurrilous drolleries, that they may befriend one another with the kind occasion of proving themselves to be yet of human race, by this only demonstration remaining to them, that they can laugh; which medium, if the wisdom of the just were known, would be found so pregnant as to afford them a double conclusion, and be as effectual, oftentimes, to prove them fools as men. Others one might read born to trouble the world, to disquiet the neighbourhood, and be the common plague of all about them, at least, if they have any within their reach and power that are wiser and more sober than themselves, or that value not their souls at so cheap a rate as they: others made to blaspheme their Maker, to rend

the sacred name of God, and make proof of their high valour and the gallantry of their brave spirits, by bidding a defiance to heaven, and proclaiming their heroic contempt of the Deity and of all religion. As if they had persuaded themselves into an opinion, that because they have had so prosperous success in the high achievements of conquering their humanity, and baffling their own fear, and reason, and conscience, death also will yield them as easy a victory, or be afraid to encounter men of so redoubted courage; that the God of heaven, rather than offend them, will not stick to repeal his laws for their sakes, or never exact the observance of them from persons of their quality; that they shall never be called to judgment, or be complemented only there with great respect, as persons that bore much sway in their country, and could number so many hundreds or thousands a year; that at least, the infernal flames will never presume to touch so worthy personages; that devils will be awed by their greatness, and fear to seize them, lest they should take it for an affront. No conceit can be imputed to these men absurd enough to over-match the absurdity of their practice. They can themselves think nothing more gross and shameful than what they daily are not ashamed to act. For what absurdity can be compassed in a thought greater than what appears in a course of life managed in perpetual hostility to all principles of reason and humanity? And either they must own all the impious folly of such thoughts, or confess, upon other accounts, an equal infatuation in their thinking faculty itself. For either they think their course justifiable, or they do not. If they do, how fatally are all things inverted in their depraved minds? Wisdom and folly, virtue and vice, good and evil, seem to them transformed into one another, and are no longer to be known by their own names. The common notions of all mankind are but blind fancies in comparison of their later and clearer illumination: and the ancient religious sentiments of all former ages, dreams and follies to their admired new light. Their wise and rare discoveries, that they and all things came by chance, that this world hath no owner or Lord, (because they never had wit or patience to consider the nonsense of them; and though they never, any of them, had the luck to see one clod of earth, or grain of sand, start up into being, out of nothing; much less ground to think, that such a world should of itself do so,) are reason enough with them, to mock at the eternal Being, and attempt to jeer religion out of the world, and all other men out of their reason and wits, as they have themselves. And sure this must be their only pretence, and their atheism the best reason, upon which to justify their constant practice. For who can think (while he sees them not

yet in chains) they should be so perfectly mad, as to acknowledge only such a deity (the author and ruler of all things) whose favour were worth nothing, or to be procured by affronts; to whom contempt were a sacrifice, and the violation of whatsoever is sacred, the most effectual propitiation? or acknowledge him for a God, whom they hope to over-power, and to prosper in a war against him?

And if they acknowledge none at all, and this be the fundamental article of their creed, that there is indeed none: then can no man charge them with any thought more grossly foolish than their own; nor can they devise to say any thing, by which more certainly to argue themselves bereft of the common understanding of men? For who that is not so, if he only take notice of his own being, may not as certainly conclude the existence of a God, as that two and two make four? Or what imagination can be too absurd to have place in that mind, that can imagine this creation to be a casualty? He would be thought besides himself that should say the same of the composition of a clock or a watch, though it were a thousand times more supposable. But if they do not justify themselves, to what purpose is it further to press them with absurdities, that persist in constant self-contradiction: or that have not so much left them of rational sensation, as to feel in their own minds the pressure of the very greatest absurdity? If they only presume they do well, because they have never asked themselves the question, or spent any thoughts about it; this speaks as much a besotted mind as any of the rest, and is as unworthy of a reasonable creature. Why have they the power of thinking? Or who do in any case more generally incur the censure of imprudence and folly, than they who have only this plea for their actions, that they did not consider? Especially when the case is so plain, and the most sudden reflection would discover the iniquity and danger of their course. And one would think nothing should be more obvious, or more readily occur to the mind of a man, than to contemplate himself, and taking notice there is such a creature in the world, furnished with such abilities and powers to consider, What was I made for? what am I to pitch upon as my proper end? nor any thing appear more horrid to him, than to cross the very ends of his creation

(2.) It may also be improved to the *directing* of our practice. For which purpose we may hence take this general rule, that it be such as becomes the expectation of a future state:—for what else is left us, since in our present state we behold nothing but vanity? We see thus stands our case, that we must measure ourselves by one of these apprehensions, either,—we are made in vain, or,—we are made for a future state.—And can

we endure to live according to the former, as if we were impertinencies in the creation, and had no proper business in it? What ingenuous person would not blush to be always in the posture of a useless hang-by; to be still hanging on, where he hath nothing to do; that if he be asked, Sir, what is your business here? he hath nothing to say. Or how can we bear it, to live as if we came into the world by chance, or rather by mistake as though our creation had been a misadventure, a thing that would not have been done, had it been better thought on? And that our Maker had over-shot himself, and been guilty of an oversight in giving us such a being? Who, that hath either just value for himself, or any reverence for his Maker, could endure either to undergo the reproach, or be guilty of the blasphemy which this would import? And who can acquit himself of the one or the other, that lives not in some measure agreeably to the expectation of somewhat beyond this present life? Let us therefore gird up the loins of our minds, and set our faces as persons designing for another world; so shaping our course, that all things may concur to signify to men the greatness of our expectations. We otherwise proclaim to the world (to our own and our Creator's wrong) that we have reasonable souls given us to no purpose. We are therefore concerned and obliged both to aim at that worthy end, and to discover and make it visible that we do so.

Nor is a design for an immortal state so mean and inglorious, or so irrational and void of a solid ground, that we have any cause either to decline or conceal it; either not to retain, or to be ashamed of our hope. Nor is there any thing to be done in prosecution of it, so unworthy as to need a corner, or that requires it to be done as a work of darkness. Neither yet is it a vain-glorious ostentation, or the affectation of making shew of an excellency above the vulgar pitch, that I persuade to: but a modest, sober avowing of our high design and hope; neither making any near approach to a proud arrogance on the one hand, nor a mean pusillanimity on the other. Truly great and generous spirits know how to carry under secular honour with that prudent and graceful decorum, as shall signify a just owning of themselves without insolence towards others. Real worth, though it do not vaunt, will shew itself; and while it doth not glare, yet cannot forbear to shine. We should endeavour the excellency of a spirit refined from earth and dross, and aspiring towards a state of immortality, may express itself, and shine in its native lustre; with its *own*, not with *borrowed* beams; with a constant, even, natural, not with an unequal, artificial light: that all that will, may see by the steady tendency of our course, that we are aiming at the great things of another world: though

we all the while, are not so much solicitous to have our end and purpose known, as to obtain them.

And verily, since the vile sons of the earth, the men of sense, that aim at no other end than to gratify their brutal appetite with such pleasure as is only to be compassed within a short life's time in this world, and who live to the reproach of their Maker, and of mankind, do not go about to hide the infamy of their low design, or conceal the degenerous baseness of their mean spirits; but while they make their belly their God, and only mind earthly things, do also glory in their shame: how much were it beneath the state and spirit of the sons of God, that are worthily designing for a glorious immortality, to be ashamed of their glory, or think of stealing a passage to heaven in the dark? No: let them know, it is not only too mean a thing for them to involve themselves in the common spirit of the sensual world, but even to seem to do so: And that this is so foul and ignominious a thing, as whereof they are concerned, not to be free from the guilt only, but the suspicion. Those worthy souls that in former, and darker days were engaged in seeking the heavenly country, thought it became them to confess themselves pilgrims and strangers on the earth; (Heb. 11.) and therein to declare plainly, that they were seeking that better country. Which confession and plain declaration we need not understand to be merely verbal, but practical and real also; such as might be understood to be the language of their lives, and of a constant, uniform course of actions, agreeable to such a design.

Let us therefore bethink ourselves, what temper of mind and manner of life may be most conformable to this design, and best become persons pretending to it: whereupon we should soon find our own thoughts instructing us, that such things as these would be most becoming and fit in reference thereto; and which we may therefore take as so many particular directions how to govern our spirits, and behave ourselves answerably to so great an expectation.

[1.] That we endeavour for a calm indifferency and dispassionate temper of mind towards the various objects and affairs that belong to this present life. There are very narrow limits already set, by the nature of the things themselves, to all the real objective value that such things have in them: and it is the part of wisdom and justice, to set the proportionable bounds to all the thoughts, cares, and passions, we will suffer to stir in our minds in reference to them. Nothing is a more evident acknowledged character of a fool, than upon every slight occasion to be in a transport. To be much taken with empty things, betokens an empty spirit. It is a part of manly forti-

tude to have a soul so fenced against foreign impressions, as little to be moved with things that have little in them: to keep our passions under a strict rein and steady command, that they be easily retractable and taught to obey: not to move till severe reason have audited the matter, and pronounced the occasion just and valuable. In which case the same manly temper will not refuse to admit a proportionable stamp and impress from the occurring object. For it is equally a prevarication from true manhood, to be moved with every thing and with nothing: the former would speak a man's spirit a feather, the latter a stone. A total apathy and insensibleness of external occurrents hath been the aim of some, but never the attainment of the highest pretenders. And if it had, yet ought it not to have been their boast; as upon sober thoughts it cannot be reckoned a perfection. But it should be endeavoured, that the passions which are not to be rooted up (because they are of nature's planting) be yet so discreetly checked and depressed, that they grow not to that enormous tallness, as to overtop a man's intellectual power, and cast a dark shadow over his soul. A rational authority must be maintained, a continency and dominion of one's self, that there be not an impotent profusion, and we be never so affected with any thing, but that the object may still be able to warrant and justify the affection, both for the nature and degree of it. Which rule, if we strictly observe and apply it to the present case, we shall rarely meet with any temporal concern that ought to move us much; both for the littleness of such things themselves, and that we have so unspeakably greater things in our view and design.

In conformity therefore to our so great expectation, we ought more particularly to watch and repress our inclinations, appetites, and affections towards each several sort and kind of objects, which time and this present state hath within the confines of it. As, how contemptuously should we look upon that empty vanity of being rich? how coldly and carelessly should we pursue, how unconcernedly should we lose any thing that might entitle us to that name? The pursuit of so despicable a trifle, with violent and peremptory desire, so as hereby to suffer a diversion from our design for another world, as to make our eternal hope less than nothing, (for to any man's calm and sober thoughts, this will be found as little:) and so will amount to a total quitting of all our pretensions to a better, future state; that is, when so we indulge this odd irrational, this wildly fanciful, and purely humoursome appetite, (of which no man can give any tolerable account,) that it becomes ravenous, when it devours a man's time, his thoughts, the strength and vigour of his spirit, swallows up his nobler designs, and makes an idle doting about he knows not what, or why, his main

business. Especially when conscience itself becomes a sacrifice to this impure unhallowed idol; and the question is wholly waved, "is this thing just and honest?" and nothing is considered, but that it is commodious and gainful. Yet, (if herein we will take upon us to pass a judgment upon other men,) it will be no way ingenuous or just, that in smaller and disputable matters, we make our own apprehensions a measure and standard to them. They are commonly aptest to do so, who have least studied the matter, and have nothing but their ignorant confidence to entitle them to the dictator's chair; where, however, having placed themselves, they liberally bestow their censures and reproaches on all that think it not fit to throw away their own eyes, and see with their bad ones: and conclude them to have no conscience, who go not according to theirs. And that they cannot but have some base design, who in any thing presume to swerve from their judgment, especially if the advantage, in any temporal respect, happen to lie on that side from which they dissent.

Nothing can indeed so comport with the spirit and design of one who believes himself made for another world, as a brave and generous disdain of stooping to the lure of present emolument, so as thereby to be drawn into any the least thing which he judges not defensible by the severest rules of reason and religion; which were to quit a serene heaven for mire and dirt. There is nothing in this world of that value, or worthy to be bought so dear, as with the loss and forfeiture of the rest and repose of a mind, quiet, benign, peaceful, and well pleased with itself. It is enough, if one find himself, by difficulties which he cannot master, constrained to dissent from persons above exception wise and pious, placidly, and without unbecoming confidence, to go on in the way which his present judgment allows, carrying with him a modest sense of human infirmity, and how possible it is, the error may lie on his own part: having yet to relieve him against that supposition, the clearness of his own spirit, the conscience of his innocency of any ill disposition or design, of his instructibleness and preparedness to admit a conviction if he err. And be he never so fully persuaded about the thing in difference, yet to consider the smallness of it, and how little cause he hath of glorying, if he know in this matter more than others, who possibly know ten times more than he, in far greater and more important matters. But, in matters clearly determined by common agreed principles, to prevaricate out of an indulgence to mere appetite, to give up one's self to practices apparently immoral and flagitious, only to comply with, and lest he should not satisfy sensual desires, is the character of one who hath abandoned the common hope of all

good men; and who, that he may have his lot with beasts in this world, dreads not to have it with devils in the other. And it is upon the same ground, equally unbecoming them that pretend to this hope, to be visibly concerned and discomposed for losses and disappointments they may meet with in this kind, when unexpected events withstand their having much of this world, or deprive them of what they have. It becomes them that reckon their good things are to come hereafter, to shew by their equal deportment and cheerful aspect in any such case, that they apprehend not themselves touched in their most considerable interests. Yea, though they suffer not losses only, but injuries; and besides that they are damnified (as much as such things can signify) they find themselves wronged; and though further trouble and danger threaten them in the same kind; they should evidence how much it is above the power either of chance or malice, not only to make them miserable, but even to disturb or make them sad: that they are not happy by a casualty: and that their happiness is not in the command of them who cannot command their own: that it only depends on the inward constitution and frame of their own spirits, attempered to the blessed objects of the invisible world, whereby they have the assurance of enjoying them fully hereafter, and the present grateful relishes thereof in the mean time. And hence, that they can be happy without the world's kindness, and in despite of its unkindness: that they have somewhat within them, by which they are enabled to rejoice in tribulation; being troubled on every side, yet not to be distressed: to "take joyfully the spoiling of goods, knowing within themselves they have in heaven a better and enduring substance:" nor to suffer or discover any perturbation or disquiet: not to have their souls ruffled; or put into disorder: nor let any cloud sit on their brow, though dark and dismal ones seem to hang over their heads.

And the same absurdity it would be to indulge to themselves an unbounded liberty of sensual pleasures. For that looks like a despair of futurity; as if a day were a mighty gain for eating and drinking, because to morrow we must die. An abstemious shyness here is comely: a tasting only the delights, whereof others suffer themselves to be ingulfed: a prudent reservedness and restraint, so as that what shall cause with others an unbeseeming transport and diffusion of themselves, be entertained not with a cynical morosity, but a pleasant composure and well-ordered complacence; keeping a due and even distance between levity and sourness. Yet there is a natural retiredness in some men's tempers; and in others an aversion to pleasures, proceeding only of a rational estimate of their emptiness and vanity in themselves which may, however, much fall short of

what the present case requires: the exigency whereof is no way satisfied, but where such a moderation is the product of a comparative judgment between the delights of the present and those of the future state; when one so enjoys any thing in this world, as to be under the power of nothing because of the more prevailing influence he is under from the power of the world to come: when his faith is the parent of his sobriety, and his denial of worldly lusts flows from the expectation of the blessed hope: when, because he more highly prizes, and lest he forfeit, eternal pleasures, he so behaves himself towards all temporary ones, as neither to abuse those that are lawful, nor to be abused by the unlawful; not to exceed in the one, nor to touch with the other.

Thus also ought we to look upon secular honours and dignity; neither to make them the matter of our admiration, affectation, or envy. We are not to behold them with a libidinous eye, or let our hearts thirst after them: not to value ourselves the more for them, if they be our lot, nor let our eye be dazzled with admiration, or distorted with envy, when we behold them the ornaments of others. We are not to express that contempt of them, which may make a breach on civility, or disturb the order and policy of the communities whereto we belong. Though this be none of our own country, and we are still to reckon ourselves but as pilgrims and strangers while we are here; yet it becomes not strangers to be insolent or rude in their behaviour, where they sojourn; how much soever greater value they may justly have of their own country. We should pay to secular greatness a due respect, without idolatry, and neither despise nor adore it; considering, at once, the requisiteness of such a thing in the present state, and the excelling glory of the other. As though in prudence and good manners we would abstain from provoking affronts towards an American sachim, or sagamore, if we did travel or converse in their country; yet we could have no great veneration for them, having beheld the royal pomp and grandeur of our own prince; especially he who were himself a courtier and favourite to his much more glorious sovereign, whom he is shortly to attend at home could have no great temptation to sue for offices and honours, or bear a very profound intrinsic homage to so mean and unexpressive an image of regality.

It can surely no way become one who seeks and expects the honour and glory which is conjunct with immortality, (Rom. 2. 7.) to be fond of the airy titles that poor mortals are wont to please themselves with; or to make one among the obsequious servile company of them whose business it is to court a vanishing shadow, and tempt a dignified trifle into the belief it is a deity; to sneak and cringe for a smile from a supercilious brow, and place his heaven in the disdainful favours of him, who, it

may be, places his own as much in thy homage, so that it befalls into the supplicant's power to be his creator, whose creature he affects to be. What eye would not soon spy out the grossness of this absurdity? And what ingenuity would not blush to be guilty of it? Let then the joyful expectants of a blessed immortality, pass by the busy throng of this fanciful exchange; and behold it with as little concern, as a grave statesman would the sports and ludicrous actions of little children; and with as little inclination of mind, as he would have to leave his business and go play with them; bestowing there, only the transient glance of a careless or a compassionate eye, and still reserving their intent steady views for the glorious hope set before them. And with a proportionable unconcernedness should they look on, and behold the various alterations of political affairs, no further minding, either the constitution or administration of government, than as the interest of the universal Ruler, the weal and safety of their prince or country are concerned in them. But how many under the specious pretence of a public spirit, make it their whole business to inspect and pry into these affairs, even with a most meanly private and interested one; watching over the public beyond the bounds of their own calling; and with no other design, than to catch at an opportunity of serving their own turns! How many that stand perpetually at a gaze, in a suspenseful expectation how things will go; either joying or hoping to behold any favourable prognostics to the party whereto they have thought fit to addict themselves! glad or desirous to see it engross power, and grasp the sum of things, not from any sense of duties towards God's vicegerents; not from love of justice or study of public advantage, but that the happier lot may befall or remain to themselves. These men are absorbed, and swallowed up of the spirit of this world, contempered only to this sublunary region, concorporate with the earth, so as to partake in all its pangs and paroxisms, and tremulous motions. By the beating of their pulse you may know the state of things in this lower world, as if they were of the same piece, and had but one soul with it. Let them see times and a state of things on earth suitable to their genius, and you put a new life and soul into them. Reduce them to a despair here, and (so little communion have they with the affairs of that other country,) the most specious inviting representation that can be made to them of the world to come hinders not, but their hearts languish and die, and become as stones within them.

But that lofty soul that bears about with it the living apprehensions of its being made for an everlasting state, so earnestly intends it, that it shall ever be a descent and vouchsafement with it, if it allow itself to take notice what busy mortals are

doing in their (as they reckon them) grand negotiations here below. And if there be a suspicion of an aptness, or inclination to intermeddle in them to their prejudice to whom that part belongs, can heartily say to it, (as the philosopher to the jealous tyrant,) We of this academy are not at leisure to mind so mean things: we have somewhat else to do than to talk of you. He hath still the image before his eye, of this world vanishing and passing away; of the other, with the everlasting affairs and concernments of it, even now ready to take place and fill up all the stage: and can represent to himself the vision (not from a melancholic fancy or crazed brain, but a rational faith and a sober well instructed mind,) of the world dissolving, monarchies and kingdoms breaking up, thrones tumbling, crowns and sceptres lying as neglected things. He hath a telescope through which he can behold the glorious appearances of the Supreme Judge; the solemn state of his majestic person; the splendid pomp of his magnificent and vastly numerous retinue; the obsequious throng of glorious celestial creatures, doing homage to their eternal King; the swift flight of his royal guards, sent forth into the four winds to gather the elect, and covering the face of the heavens with their spreading wings; the universal silent attention of all to that loud sounding trumpet that shakes the pillars of the world, pierces the inward caverns of the earth, and resounds from every part of the encircling heavens; the many myriads of joyful expectants arising, changing, putting on glory, taking wing, and contending upwards, to join themselves to the triumphant heavenly host: the judgment set; the books opened; the frightful amazed looks of surprised wretches; the equal administration of the final judgment; the adjudication of all to their eternal states; the heavens rolled up as a scrowl; the earth and all things therein consumed and burnt up.

And now, what spirit is there any more left in him towards the trivial affairs of a vanishing world? how indifferent a thing is it with him who bears himself highest in a state of things whereof he foresees the certain hastening end? Though he will not neglect the duty of his own place, is heartily concerned to have the knowledge and fear of God more generally obtained in this apostate world; and is ready to contribute his utmost regular endeavours for the preservation of common peace and order in subserviency hereto. Yet abstractedly from these considerations, and such as have been before mentioned, he is no more concerned who is uppermost, than one would, passing by a swarm of flies, which hath the longest wings, or which excels the rest in sprightliness or briskness of motion. And for himself, he can insert this amongst his most serious thanksgivings, that while the care is incumbent on others, of watching over

the public peace and safety, he may sit still and converse with God and his own more sedate thoughts. How secure is he in this, that infinite wisdom governs the world! that all things shall be disposed the best way, to the best and most valuable ends! that an afflicted state shall never befall unto good men, but when it is fittest and most conducible it should do so! that the prosperity carnal appetite covets, is never denied them, but when it would be pernicious! How calm is he in the midst of external troubles! how placid and serene a spirit inhabits his peaceful breast! When all things are shaken round about him, he is not shaken. He bears all sorts of troubles, but creates none to others, nor is disturbed by any himself. But they that delight to see this world rolling or fixed, as may most serve their private purposes, and have a perpetual quarrel with it, while it looks not kindly upon them; their life is bound up in it, and their pretences to another, are but the languid, faint notions of what they never heartily believe nor desire. Upon the whole matter; nothing is more agreeable to this great expectation, than a steady restraint and moderation of our passions towards things without us; that is, all the several sorts of external objects and affairs, that so variously invite and tempt our observation and regard in this our present state.

[2.] I next add: a further congruity, if we pretend to this expectation, is, that we be not over-much taken up in minding the body. For this looks like a design (or that inconsistent wish) to have our present state perpetuated; and that the thoughts are remote from us of a change for a better. As if notwithstanding all that the divine goodness hath promised concerning the future inheritance of the free and heaven-born seed, this did still lie nearest to our hearts, O that Ishmael might live in thy sight! And that the belief did miserably languish with us, of any better portion than what our eyes do already behold; together with the apprehension of a spiritual being in us, to be ripened into a complete and actual capacity of enjoying what is better. It is true, that all the exorbitant workings of those meaner and ignoble passions that are moved by objects and occasions without and foreign to us, have the body for their first and last, their spring and source, their centre and end. But thence it becomes the more proper and requisite, that we draw nearer this their seat and centre, and strike at the root; and in killing that inordinate love and solicitude for the body, mortify them all at once. We are indeed so far to comply with the pleasure of our Maker, as not to despise the mean abode which he hath assigned us for awhile in the body. But withal, to take heed lest we so cross and resist it, as to make caring for the body our whole business; which he hath only enjoined

us in subserviency to an unspeakably greater and more important business. Its health and welfare ought upon very valuable accounts to be carefully preserved by all prudent means: but to indulge its slothful desires, and comply with its licentious wild cravings, is far beneath us, a base unmanning of ourselves, and would signify, as if so absurd a conceit had passed with us into a settled judgment, that a reasonable immortal spirit was created only to tend and serve a brute. It is monstrous to behold, with how common consent multitudes that professedly agree in the belief of the immortal nature of their souls, do yet agree to debase and enslave them to the meanest servility to their mortal bodies; so as these are permitted to give laws to them, to prescribe them rules of living, and what their daily employment shall be. For observe the designs they drive, and what is the tendency of their actions and affairs (whence the judgment is to be made concerning their inward thoughts, deliberations, and resolves,) and is not the body the measure and mark of them all? What import or signification is there in this course, of a design for futurity? And (which increases the folly of it to a wonder) they can make a shift to go on thus from year to year, and take no notice of the absurdity! They agree to justify each one himself, and one another. The commonness of the course takes away all sense of the horrid madness of it. And because each doth as the rest do, they seem to imagine they all do well, and that there is nothing exceptionable in the case; and go on: as the silly sheep, *Non qua eundum est sed qua itur: not the way they ought, but which they see others go before them. Sen.*

But, if any place could be found for calm and sober thoughts, what would be reckoned a greater impertinency, than to be at so great pains for maintaining a bodily life, without considering what that life shall serve for? to employ our utmost care to live, but to live for we know not what? It becomes us to be patient of the body, not fond: to treat and use our bodies as things shortly to be put off and laid aside: to care for them, not for their own, but the works sake we have to do in them, and leave it to them to indulge and pamper the body, who expect never to live out of it: not to concern ourselves, that the circumstances of our bodily state be such as will gratify our appetites, but answer the ends for which our Maker thought fit we should live awhile in the body: reckoning with ourselves, we are lodged in these mean receptacles (though some what commodiously, yet) but for a little while, and for great purposes, and more minding our journey and home, than our entertainment in our inn: contentedly bearing the want of bodily accommodations that are not easily to be compassed, and the pressure of

unavoidable bodily infirmities; not much pitying ourselves because of them; nor deeply regretting it, if wants and pains pinch our flesh; nay, though we see the outward man perishing, so we can but find the inward renewing day by day.

[3.] That we set ourselves with the whole intention of our souls, to mind the concernments of the future state, the invisible things of the other world; and direct the main stream of our thoughts, desires, hopes, and joys, thitherward. For how highly justifiable and becoming is it, that we principally mind the state and things we were made for? We should therefore make these familiar to ourselves, and use our spirits to those more noble and pleasant themes: recounting often, how unworthy it is of them to grovel in the dust, or choose the objects of their converse by such measures only as are taken from sense. It is an iniquity which, though God may be so gracious to us as to forgive, we should not easily forgive to ourselves, that we have so often chosen to converse with empty trifles, while so great things have invited our thoughts in vain. Their remoteness from sense hath little of excuse in it, and unworthy a reasonable creature. Methinks they should be ashamed to allege it, who consider themselves furnished with an intellectual power, that doth, in many other instances, control the judgment of sense, and impeach it of falsehood. Would we not blush to profess it for a principle, that there is nothing real that exceeds the sphere of our sense? We would reckon it a part of modesty not to ascribe too much to our own understandings, or presume too far upon our intellectual ability, against the judgment of sage and knowing persons. How is it then, that we think it not immodest, to oppose the apprehensions of our dull and incapacious sense to the common faith and reason of all good and wise men, that are or have been in the world, as well as our own? If we have not seen what the state of things is in the other world, are we not told? and have we not enough to assure us, that, it is he hath told us, whose nature cannot suffer him to impose upon us, or represent things otherwise than they are? Who else can be the author of so common a persuasion? If any man had been the first inventor of the opinion,—that there is another state of things to succeed to this, would he not have assumed it to himself, that he was so? would he not have owned it, and gloried in it? Or would not some or other of his proselyted disciples have preserved his name and memory, and transmitted them to posterity? Could so vast a sect be without a head or master, known and celebrated among men?

Less plausible opinions find some owners; Why is it not said, who was the first broacher of this? And if he can find no other parent for it, but he who was the Parent of our beings,

how grateful should such a discovery be to us, both for his sake and its own? Upon his account, we should surely think it worthy to be believed; and upon its own, to be considered and seriously thought on, with greatest delight and sense of pleasure.

Many things that we reckon considerable upon much lower accounts, we so believe, as to let them engage our hearts, and influence our practice, upon much lower evidence. How entirely are men's spirits taken up many times about meaner matters, whereof they have only a (much more uncertain and fallible) report from one another? What pretence can we have, less to regard the testimony of him that made us, discovering to us things so great, so important, so rational in themselves, even though they had not been so expressly revealed? Let us therefore drive the matter to a clear and short issue, and come to a resolution with ourselves; have we reason to believe such things, or no? If we can so far impose upon ourselves, as to think we have not; or be tempted into so abject, so unrequired, and so unwarrantable a self-denial, so base an esteem of our own beings, as to account the things of this earth and present world have enough in them to answer any ends we can suppose ourselves made for; let us no longer mock the world, by pretending to believe what we believe not. But if this be our settled judgment, and we will avow and own it, that we believe these things; let us no longer expose and make ourselves ridiculous, by counteracting our own professed belief in matters of such moment, pretending to believe and disregarding them at the same time. It is absurd and foolish, to believe such things and not mind them much, or not let our souls and our practice be commanded and governed by them: not to have our desires, and cares, and hopes, and joys, influenced thereby to the uttermost. How rational is it, here to be deeply solicitous, that by the unsuitableness of our own spirits we defeat not our own expectations! How pleasant and delectable (that danger being provided against,) to sit down and compare our present with our expected state, what we are, with what we hope to be ere long! To think of exchanging shortly, infirmity, pollution, darkness, deformity, trouble, complaint; for power, purity, light, beauty, rest, and praise! How pleasant, if our spirits be fitted to that state! The endeavour whereof is a further congruity in the present case, namely,

[4.] That we make it our principal business to intend our spirits, to adorn and cultivate our inward man. What can more become us, if we reckon we have somewhat about us made for immortality, than to bestow our chief care upon that immortal part? Therefore, to neglect our spirits, confessedly capable of so high an estate, to let them languish under wasting distempers,

or lie as the sluggard's field, overgrown with thorns and briars, is as vile a slur as we can put upon ourselves and our own profession. We should therefore make this the matter of our earnest study. What would be the proper improvements and ornaments of our spirits, and will most fitly qualify them for the state we are going into; and of our daily observation how such things thrive and grow in us. Especially, we should not be satisfied, till we find in ourselves a refinedness from this earth, a thorough purgation from all undue degrees of sensual inclination and affection, the consumption of our dross by a sacred fire from heaven, a spirit of judgment and of burning, an aptitude to spiritual exercises and enjoyments, high complacency in God, fervent love, a worshipping posture of soul, formed to the veneration of the eternal wisdom, goodness, power, holiness; profound humility and abnegation of ourselves, a praiseful frame of spirit, much used to gratulations and thanksgivings, a large and universal love, imitating as much as is possible the divine, a proneness to do good to all, a steady composure and serene temper of spirit, the repose and rest of a contented mind, not boisterous, nor apt unto disquiet, or to create storms to ourselves or the world, every way suitable to the blissful regions, where nothing but perfect purity, entire devotedness to God, love, goodness, benignity, well-pleasedness, order, and peace, shall have place for ever

This we ought to be constantly intent upon, as the business of our lives, our daily work, to get our spirits so attempered and fitted to heaven, that if we be asked, What design we drive? What are we doing? we may be able to make this true answer, We are dressing ourselves for eternity. And since nothing is required hereto, that is simply impossible, nothing but what is agreeable to our natures, and would be a perfection to them; how worthy and commendable an ambition were it, to be always aspiring? not to rest or take up beneath the highest pitch of attainable excellency in these kinds? reckoning every degree thereof a due to our natures, and that they have not what belongs to them, while any thing of real intrinsic moral goodness is yet wanting; and not only due, but necessary, and what we shall have need of in reference to the state we are shortly to enter upon; that except such things be in us, and abound, we cannot have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. And should we, pretending to such an expectation, omit such endeavours of preparing ourselves, it were alike thing as if an unbred peasant should go about to thrust himself, with an expectation of high honours and preferments, into the prince's court; or as if a distracted man should expect to be employed

in the greatest and most intricate affairs of state; or an uninstructed idiot take upon him to profess and teach philosophy.

Therefore let us consider: Are we conscious of no unfitness for that blessed state? to dwell in the presence of the holy God? to be associated with the heavenly assembly of pure intellectual spirits? to consort and join with them in their celebrations and triumphant songs? Can we espy no such thing in ourselves, as an earthly mind, aversation to God, as pride, disdain, wrath, or envy, admiration of ourselves, aptness to seek our own things with the neglect of others, or the like? And do not our hearts then misgive, and tell us we are unready, not yet prepared to approach the divine presence, or to enter into the habitation of his holiness and glory? And what then have we to do, but set ourselves to our preparatory work; to set our watches, make our observations, take strict notice of all the deflexions and obliquities of our spirits, settle our methods, and hasten a redress? Do not we know this is the time and state of preparation? And since we know it, how would the folly torture us, by reflection, of having betrayed ourselves to a surprisal! None are ever wont to enter upon any new state without some foregoing preparation. Every more remarkable turn or change in our lives, is commonly (if at all foreknown) introduced by many serious forethoughts. If a man be to change his dwelling, employment, condition, common discretion will put him upon thinking how to comport with the place, business, converse, and way of living he is next to betake himself to. And his thoughts will be the more intense, by how much more momentous the change. If he be to leave his country, with no probability of returning; if he be designed to a station, the circumstances whereof carry any thing of awfulness in them; if to public business, if on court attendances, with what solemnity and address are such things undertaken! How loth and ashamed would one be, to go into such a condition, being totally unapt, not at all knowing how to behave himself in it! But what so great change as this can the nature of man admit, that a soul, long shut up in flesh, is now to go forth from its earthly mansion, and return no more; expecting to be received into the glorious presence of the eternal King, and go act its part among the perfected spirits that attend his throne! How solicitous endeavour of a very thorough preparation doth this case call for! But how ill doth the common course of men agree to this, who never have such matters in their thoughts, who so much neglect not their very hogs as they do their spirits!

[5.] That we have much conversation with God. He is the only full and permanent good; therefore the endeavour of becoming very inward with him, doth best agree with the ex-

pectation of a state perfectly good and happy. To expect this, and converse only with shadows and vanishing things, is to expect to be happy without a happiness; or that our happiness should betide us as a casual thing, or be forced upon us at last whether we will or no. But since our happiness in God is on his part not necessary, but vouchsafed and gratuitous, depending on mere good pleasure; is it our best way of ingratiating ourselves with him, to neglect him and live as without him in the world; to keep ourselves strangers to him all our days, with a purpose only of flying to him at last, when all things else that were wont to please us are vanished and gone? And if we could suppose his wisdom and justice to admit his forgiving so provoking contempt of him, and receiving an exiled soul forced out of its earthly abode, that to the last moment of it would never look after him, or have to do with him; yet can it be supposed, that its own habitual aversation to him could allow it to be happy in him? Especially being increased and confirmed by its consciousness and sense of guilt? How can these but make it banish itself, and in a sullen enmity and despair perpetually flee the divine presence? What can in this case be more natural to it, than to give up itself to eternal solitary wanderings, as a fugitive from God; to affect to be ever enwrapt in its own darkness, and hidden from his sight, and be an everlasting tormentor to itself? Can we be happy in him whom we do not love; or love whom we will not know, or be acquainted with?

What sure ground of hope can we imagine to ourselves, that our reconciliation and acquaintance with God shall ever be brought about, if it be not done while we are here in the body? Will we be so vain, as to cherish a hope that not only affronts the visible import of God's revelation, but the very reason of things, and the natural tendency of our own spirits? Nor indeed (if we would consider better) can we possibly hope for what we desire not, or whereto our hearts are in an habitual disaffection, otherwise than (in the present case) negatively, and that our infidelity permits us not to fear the contrary. Yea, and the lively hope of a blessedness in God, as it includes desire, would certainly infer that purity (the image of his own) that could never fail to incline our hearts to him, and which would habituate us to a course of walking with him in inward communion. And this were comely and agreeable to our pretences, if while we profess ourselves made for another state, we retire ourselves from the fading things that put a vanity into this, and single out, by our own choice, the stable good which we expect ever to enjoy. How befitting is it, to pass by all

things with neglect, and betake ourselves hither with this sense? "Lord, I have viewed the world over, in which thou hast set me; I have tried how this and that thing will fit my spirit and the design of my creation; and can find nothing in which to rest, for nothing here doth itself rest, but such things as please me for awhile, in some degree, vanish and flee as shadows from before me. Lo, I come to thee, the eternal Being, the Spring of life, the Centre of rest, the Stay of the creation, the Fulness of all things! I join myself to thee, with thee I will lead my life and spend my days, with whom I aim to dwell for ever, expecting when my little time is over to be taken up ere long into thy eternity."

And since we, who live under the gospel, have heard of the Redeemer, of the dignity of his person, of his high office and power, of his merciful design and great achievements for the restoring of lapsed and lost souls: it is most agreeable to our apprehensions of the vanity of this present state, and our expectations for the future, that we commit ourselves to him: that with entire trust and love, devotedness and subjection, we give ourselves up to his happy conduct, to be led by him to God, and instated into that eternal blessedness which we look for. His kingdom is not of this world; as we profess not to be. We cannot be innocently ignorant, that its constitution and frame, its laws and ordinances, its aspect and tendency in itself, and the whole course of its administration, are directed to that other state. "He hath overcome death, and him that had the power of it; hath brought life and immortality to light, is the first begotten from the dead, and the first fruits of them that slept;" hath opened heaven to us, and is himself ascended and entered as our victorious triumphant Captain and Forerunner. He is adorned with highest power, and hath set up a universal kingdom extended to the utmost bounds of this apostate world, and the vaster regions of innocent and constantly loyal spirits. His proclamations are issued out, his ensigns displayed to invite and call in whosoever are weary of the sin and vanity of this wretched world, of their alienation from the life of God, of living in the midst of death; to join themselves to him, the Prince and Lord of life, and be led by him to the immortal state. If the present state of things appear dismal to us; if we reckon it a woful spectacle to behold sin and death reigning, wickedness and mortality acting their combined parts, to waste the world and lay it desolate; if we would deliver ourselves and escape from the common ruin, are seriously designing for heaven, and that world in which death hath no place, nor any shadow of death; let us betake ourselves to him, enroll our names, put ourselves

under his banners and discipline, strictly observing the laws and following the guidance of that our invisible Lord, who will be Author of eternal salvation to them that obey him, and save to the utmost all that come to God through him. How dear should he be to us! How cheerfully should we trust him, how dutifully serve him, how faithfully adhere to him, both for his own sake, and that of the design he hath in hand for us, and the pleasant savour of heaven and immortality which breathes in both! But if we neglect him, and disown our relation to him; or if we let days and years go over our heads, wherein we drowsily slumber; roll ourselves in the dust of the earth; and while we call ourselves christians, forget the reason and importance of our own name, and think not of our being under his call and conduct to the eternal kingdom and glory: this is perversely to reject what we say (only) we seek; to disclaim and renounce our pretences to immortality; to blast and damn our own great hopes.

[6.] It is congruous to our expectation of so great things after death, that we live in a cheerful pleasant expectation of it. For what must necessarily intervene, though not grateful in itself should be reckoned so, for the sake of that which is. This only can upon the best terms reconcile us to the grave; that our greatest hopes lie beyond it; and are not hazarded by it, but accomplished. Although, indeed, nothing were to be expected hereafter; yet so little suitable entertainment doth this world afford to a reasonable spirit, that the mere weariness of beholding a scene of vanity and folly, might well make a recess acceptable. For is it so grateful a thing to observe the confused scramble and hurry of the world? how almost every one makes it his business to catch from another what is worth nothing? with what toil, and art, and violence men pursue, what when they embrace they find a shadow? to see deluded mortals, each one intent upon his own particular design, and most commonly interfering with another's: some imposed upon by others over-reaching wit, and all by their own folly: some lamenting their losses, others their short and unsatisfying acquisitions: many pleasing themselves with being mocked, and contentedly hugging the empty cloud, till death comes and ends the story, and ceases the busy agitation; that is, with so many particular persons, not with the world: a new succession still springing up, that continue the interlude, and *still act over the same parts, ad tædium usque!*

What serious person, who that is not in love with impertinency and foolery, would much regret it, to close his eyes, to have the curtains drawn, and bid good-night to the world without ever wishing to see the morning of such another day?

And even they that have the world most in their power, and can command what they please for the gratifying of their appetites, without the contradiction and control of others, what can they enjoy more to morrow than they did yesterday; or the next year than this? Is it so much worth the while to live, to see a few more persons bow the knee? to extend power a little further? to make another essay, what pleasure sense can taste in some or other hitherto unexperimented rarity? What more peculiar gusto this or that thing will afford; and try the other dish? or to renew the same relishes over again? He whose creative fancy could make him golden mountains in a dream, create him a prince of nations, give him to enjoy the most delicious pleasures of the world in idea, might, with some plausible shew of reason, be deemed the happier man, than he that hath and is all this indeed: for his toil is less, and his victories unbloody, his pleasures not so impure. However, one would think, that to such whose utmost attainments end only in the pleasure of their sense, and have but this epiphonema, "Now let us sit down, eat drink and be merry." A little time might suffice for business of no more weight; and that no man, after he hath once seen the course of the world and tasted of its best delicacies, should greatly wish for a renewal or long-continued repetition of so fulsome vanities.

But the most find not the world so kind, and are not so much exercised in the innovating of pleasures as miseries, (changes being their only remedies, as the moralist speaks; or in bearing (more sadly) the same every day's burden; and drawing out the series of their calamities in the same kind through the whole course of their time. And surely, these things considered, there wants not what might persuade a sceptic, or even a perfect infidel, as to another world, not so much to be in love with this. For upon the whole, let but the case be thus put; is it not as good to do nothing, as to be busy to no purpose? And again, is it not as good to be nothing, as to be, and do nothing? Sober reason would judge, at least, there were but little odds. But now; if such considerations as have been mentioned, would suffice to state the matter in *æquilibrio,* to make the scales even; ought the rational sober belief of a blessed immortality to do nothing to turn the ballance? Ought the love of God to do nothing? The desire and hope of a state perfectly good and happy, quiet and peaceful; of living in the region of undefiled, innocent love and pleasure; in the communion of holy and blessed spirits, (all highly pleased, not in their own only, but one another's happiness; and all concentering in the admiration and praise of their common Parent and Lord;) ought all this nothing to alter the case with us; or

signify nothing to the inclining our minds to the so unspeakably better part? Methinks since we acknowledge such an order of intelligent (and already happy) creatures, we should even blush to think they should be spectators of our daily course and (too plainly discovered) inclinations; so disform and unagreeable to all the laws and dictates of reasonable nature? What censures, may we think, do they pass upon our follies? Are those things great in their eyes, that are so in ours? In lesser matters (as some interpret that passage) indecencies are to be avoided, because of those blessed spirits. 1. Cor. 11. 10. May we not then be ashamed, that they should discern our terrene dispositions: and see us come so unwillingly into their consort and happy state? Although our present depressing circumstances will not suffer us to be in all things, as yet, conformable to their high condition, we should however carry it as candidates thereto, studying to approve ourselves, waiting and longing to be transumed and taken up into it.

And since we have so high and great an expectation, and it is understood and known, that the very perfection and end of our beings is no otherwise attainable, than by putting off our sordid flesh, and laying aside this earthly appurtenance; that yet there should be so fixed and prevailing an aversion to it, is a most unaccountable thing, and one of the greatest problems in nature. I say, prevailing: for admit, what is like to be alleged, that an addictedness to the body is by natural inclination: ought not the laws of a superior to prevail over those of the inferior nature? And is not the love of God a higher natural law than that of the body; to whom here our service is little, yea our disservice much; and from whose most desirable commerce we suffer so uncomfortable a disclusion by the sad circumstances of our bodily state? Are we more nearly allied to a piece of clay, than to the Father of our spirits? And again, is not every thing nearest to itself; and obliged to place love there, rather than on any inferior thing (at least) how nearly soever united; since there can be no pretence of any such nearer union, than of a thing with itself? And are not our souls and our bodies (though united, yet) distinct things? Why then should not our souls, that are capable of understanding their own interest, mind that first, intend most their own perfection and improvement, and begin their charity at home? It is not strange, that what is weaker and more ignoble, should affect union with what is above it, and a spring of life to it: but when it is found burdensome, nothing forbids, but that the superior being may be well content, upon fair and allowable terms, to be rid of the burden. Therefore, though flesh and blood may reluctate and shrink at it, when we think of laying it down; yet it becomes

immortal spirits, to consider their own affairs, and be (more principally) intent upon what will be their own advantage. If so mean a creature as a sorry flea, finding it can draw a suitable aliment from our bodies, affect to dwell there, and is loth to leave us; it were a ludicrous pity to be therefore content to endure its troublesome vellications, because we fear the poor animal should be put to its shifts, and not be otherwise able to find a subsistence.

It is true, that the great Creator and Lord of the universe, hath not permitted us the liberty of so throwing off our bodies when we will, which otherwise are in dignity far more beneath our spirits than so despicable a creature is beneath them. And to his disposal that hath ordered this conjunction for a time (whether we look upon it as an effect of his simple pleasure, or of his displeasure) we must yield an awful and a patient submission, till this part of his providence towards us have run its course and attained its ends. And then, how welcome should the hour of our discharge and freedom be, from so troublesome an associate! Which upon no other account, than that of duty towards the Author of our beings, one would more endure; than to have the most noisome offensive vermine always preying upon his flesh. At least, (though the consideration of our own advantage had no place with us in this matter,) the same sense of duty towards our great Creator, which should make us patient of an abode in the body while he will have it so, should also form our spirits to a willing departure when it shall be his pleasure to release us thence. But, that neither a regard to his pleasure, nor our own blessedness, should prevail against our love to the body, is the unaccountable thing I speak of. And to plead only, in the case, the corruption of our natures that sets us at odds with God and ourselves, is to justify the thing by what is itself most unjustifiable; or rather (as some that have affected to be styled philosophers have been wont to expedite difficulties, by resolving the matter into the usual course of nature) to resolve the thing into itself, and say, it is so, because it is so, or is wont to be; and indeed, plainly to confess there is no account to be given of it. This being the very thing about which we expostulate, that reasonable nature should so prevaricate. The commonness whereof doth not take away the wonder, but rather render it more dreadful and astonishing.

The truth is, the incongruity in the present case is only to be solved by redress; by earnest strivings with God, and our own souls, till we find ourselves recovered into a right mind; into the constitution and composure whereof a generous fortitude hath a necessary ingrediency; that usually upon lower motives refuses no change of climate, and will carry a man into

unknown countries, and through greatest hazards in the pursuit of honourable enterprizes, of a much inferior kind. It is reckoned a brave and manly thing, to be in the temper of one's mind a citizen of the world, (meaning it of this lower one:)but why not rather of the universe? And it is accounted mean and base, that one should be so confined by his fear or sloth to that spot of ground where he was born, as not upon just inducement to look abroad, and go for warrantable and worthy purposes (yea, if it were only honest self-advantage) as far as the utmost ends of the earth: but dare we not venture a little farther? These are too narrow bounds for a truly great spirit. Any thing that is tinctured with earth, or savours of mortality, we should reckon too mean for us; and not regret it, that heaven and immortality are not to be attained but by dying; so should the love of our own souls, and the desire of a perpetual state of life, triumph over the fear of death. But it may be alleged by some, that it is only a solicitous love to their souls, that makes them dread this change. They know it will not fare with all alike hereafter, and know not what their own lot shall be. And is this indeed our case? Then, what have we been doing all this while? And how are we concerned to lose no more time? But too often a terrene spirit lurks under this pretence; and men allege their want of assurance of heaven, when the love of this earth, which they cannot endure to think of leaving, holds their hearts.

And, (a little to discuss this matter,) what would we have to assure us? Do we expect a vision or a voice? Or are we not to try ourselves; and search for such characters in our own souls, as may distinguish and note us out for heaven? Among these, what can be more clear and certain than this, that we have our hearts much set upon it? They that have their conversations in heaven, may from thence expect the Saviour, who shall change their vile bodies (the bodies of their humiliation, or low abject state,) and make them like his own glorious body. Phil. 3. 20. 21. God, who will render to every man according to his works, will give them that by patient continuance in well-doing seek honour and glory and immortality, eternal life. Rom. 2. 6. 7. They that set their affections (or minds) on the things above, not those on the earth; when Christ shall appear, who is their life, shall appear with him in glory. Col. 3. 2. 3. 4. Mistake not the notion of heaven, or the blessedness of the other world; render it not to yourselves a composition of sensual enjoyments: understand it (principally) to consist in perfect holiness and communion with God, (as his own word represents it, and as reason hath taught even some pagans to reckon of it;) and you

cannot judge of your own right by a surer and plainer rule, than that eternal blessedness shall be theirs, whose hearts are truly bent and directed towards it. Admit we then this principle; and now let us reason with ourselves from it: we have a discovery made to us of a future state of blessedness in God, not as desirable only in itself, but as attainable and possible to be enjoyed, (the Redeemer having opened the way to it by his blood, and given us, at once, both the prospect and the offer of it,) so that it is before us as the object of a reasonable desire. Now either our hearts are so taken with this discovery, that we above all things desire this state, or not. If they be, we desire it more than our earthly stations and enjoyments, are willing to leave the world and the body to enjoy it; and so did falsely accuse ourselves of a prevailing aversion to this change. If they be not, the thing is true, that we are upon no terms willing to die: but the cause is falsely, or partially assigned. It is not so much because we are unassured of heaven, but (as was above suspected) because we love this world better, and our hearts centre in it as our most desirable good.

Therefore we see how unreasonably this is often said, we are unwilling to change states, because we are unassured. The truth is, they are unassured, because they are unwilling; and what then ensues? They are unwilling because they are unwilling. And so they may endlessly dispute themselves round, from unwillingness to unwillingness. But is there no way to get out of this unhappy circle? In order to it, let the case be more fully understood: either this double unwillingness must be referred to the same thing, or to divers: if to the same thing, it is not sense; they say what signifies nothing; for being to assign a cause of their unwillingness to quit the body, to say, because they are unwilling, (namely, of that,) is to assign no cause, for nothing can be the cause of itself: but if they refer to divers things, and say, they are unwilling to go out of the body, because they are unwilling to forsake earth for heaven; the case is then plain, but sad, and not alterable, but with the alteration of the temper of their spirits, Wherefore let us all apply ourselves (since with none this is so fully done, that no more is needful) to the serious endeavour of getting our souls purged from the dross of this world, and enamoured of the purity and blessedness of heaven, so the cause and effect will vanish together; we shall find that suitableness and inclination in our spirits to that blessedness as may yield us the ground of a comfortable persuasion that it belongs to us; and then, not be unwilling, though many deaths stood in our way, to break through to attain it

A

DISCOURSE

RELATING TO THE

EXPECTATION

OF

FUTURE BLESSEDNESS.

WITH

AN APPENDIX.

A

DISCOURSE OF PATIENCE,

AS IT HATH RESPECT

To the Expectation

OF THE

FUTURE PROMISED BLESSEDNESS.

Heb. 10, xxxvi.

For ye have need of patience; that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

IT is evident, the Creator of this lower world never intended it to be the perpetual dwelling place of its inhabitants, if man had continued innocent: inasmuch as sin and death, by inseparable connection, entered together; had sin never entered, death would never have had place here. And whereas, by the blessing of God, multitudes had been continually born into this world, and none have ever died out of it; by consequence it must have been, in time, so over-peopled, as not to contain its inhabitants. Whereupon, man having been created in a state of probation, as his fall shewed, and a candidate for a better state in some nobler region; the time of probation being over (the limits whereof, considering the sad events that soon ensued, it was to no purpose for us to know, nor consequently for God to reveal) it could not be, but that nature itself, being, in every one, pure and genuine, must prompt him to continual aspirings towards the highest perfection, whereof, by the divine will, he should find himself capable. Though yet it could not consist with the sinfulness of his present state to be over-hasty; but the conscience of his being a debtor for all his present attainments to the freest and most munificent bounty, must oblige him to a dutiful compliance with the wise, and sovereign pleasure of his blessed Lord; to a cheerful contentation, and

willingness, that he should make what further use of him he should see fit, for transmitting a holy life and nature, to such as should come after him; and to a most calm, serene, and pleasant expectation of being seasonably translated higher.

But now sin and death having invaded this world and spread through it, into how horrid a gulf have they turned this part of God's creation! Men having by their own apostacy cut themselves off from God, do each of them grasp at Deity; every one attempts to fill up his room, and is so profanely insolent, as to affect being a God to himself, his own first and last. And all having withdrawn themselves from God, and abandoned his interest, which the law of their creation, and their dependent state, obliged them to serve; they have no common interest left; whereupon every one makes his own, his only interest. And that sovereign principle of divine love being extinct, whereby they were to love God with all their hearts, souls, minds, and might, which is the first and great command; the second branch, like the former, by which they were all, for his sake, to love each other, as himself, naturally fails and dies. Whence every one sets up himself, in exclusion to God, and all other men. And that self, (all concern for their better, and nobler part, which could only have its support and satisfaction in God, being suppressed and lost) is only their baser, their carnal self. It is this alone, they are concerned for. And every one seeks to catch and engross all that he can, for the service and gratification of this vile, sensual self, out of this sensible world; which, because it is all empty vanity, and hath not enough in it to satiate so enormous, and ungoverned an appetite, this makes them tear this world in pieces; every one snatching what he can of it for himself. Hence are wars, and fightings, James 4. 1. 4. And as by *friendship*, every one seeks to contract with this world separately, and alone, so as to engross it to himself, apart from other men, they make themselves enemies to God; so they become devils to one another. And thus are men generally drowned in perdition and destruction. But the merciful God hath appointed his own Son, a Redeemer for us, who gave himself for our sins, to deliver us (to take us out from, as the word Gal. 1. 4. signifies) this present evil world; whose first law, and most deeply fundamental to the whole Christian state, as the case before stated required, is that of self-denial; which, so far as it obtains, doth truly restore us to ourselves, and to our first and primitive state, and place, in God's creation. For having suffered once for us, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, 1 Pet. 3. 18. and having redeemed us to God by his blood, Rev. 5. 9. when he shall

have obtained this, his end upon us, all things fall right with us as to him, ourselves, and one another.

Yet because the wise and God-becoming methods, which are used in pursuance of the Redeemer's design, do not generally take place, or prevail against the spirit of this world; but men, through their own wicked inclination, obstinately adhere to this world, seeking their all from it; and the usurping God of this world blinding their minds, that the glorious light of the gospel of Christ should not shine to them, (2 Cor. 4. 4.) and being an inworking spirit in the children of disobedience, (Ephes. 2. 2.) leading them captive at his will, (2 Tim.2.26.) and that this prince of the darkness of this world, made up of malice and envy against God, and of malignity and mischief against men, as their common Apollyon, and destroyer, doth with all his legions haunt and infest this lower world, till the time of their torment come; and that, thus enmity against God and his Christ is fomented, and naturally propagated from age to age in this world; it is therefore God's righteous and declared pleasure, to put an end to this state of things; not to continue this world, as the stage of his perpetuated dishonours; but to shut it up by the final judgment, and at last consume it with fire. In the mean time, while he is gradually consuming sinners out of this earth, he is, by equal degrees, gathering home his own out of it. And to them, how great a privilege is it to be taken out from this present evil world! Which that they may apprehend with savour and relish, their blessed Lord hath let them have a foresight of death abolished, and of life and immortality brought to light in his gospel; and gives them the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that they may know the hope of their calling, (Ephes. 1. 17, 18.) endowing them with that faith, which is the substance of the things they hope for. Heb. 11. 1. Whereupon, having all the glories of the other world in view, and the representation of a state, which they have reason to apprehend as much more blissful and glorious, than, in the way of even, primitive nature, they could have attained to; in proportion, as the second Adam doth excel the first in dignity, performances, and glory: here, therefore, their *need of patience*, in expecting this final issue of things, to themselves in particular, and to the whole redeemed community, is most conspicuous, and appears great, even as it relates to this expectation, though they did not labour under the pressure of very grievous evils besides, which yet must much increase that need.

But it is this *expectation* itself, to which I intend principally to confine the present discourse. In reference whereunto, the greater the pleasure is of our fore-sight, the greater need we shall have of this patience; that is, as our fore-sight, though be-

holding the terrible things, death, and the final dissolution of all things, which must intervene, doth yet terminate on the blessed consequents thereof. And those consequents, namely, the enjoyments and blessedness of the future state, it is plain the apostle did intend in these words, as the context evidently shews, that is, whether you consider the foregoing, or the following context. For that great recompence of reward, mentioned in the immediately foregoing, ver. 35. and the salvation of our souls, in the close of this chapter; and the things hoped for, and not seen, in the very beginning of the next, do plainly shew, the discourse being of a piece, that the *promise* to be received, must be the promise of that blessedness, that is not to be enjoyed, in the fulness of it but by intervening death; nor by all holy men together till the end of all things, chap. 11. 13. And whereas we have here the expression of *receiving* the promise, it is plain the promise must be understood objectively; that is, that transcendent good that was promised; namely, that principally, wherein all the promises do finally and lastly centre: which, it is plain, the apostle here most especially intends, as being eminently called the promise. Whereupon: there are now two things that offer themselves to our observation from this scripture:—that the business of a sincere christian in this world is to be doing the will of God: and—that patience, in expecting the consequent blessedness of the future state, is a needful requisite in every sincere and thorough christian. The former of these I shall not insist upon; but only touch transiently.

I need not tell you that, by the will of God, we are to understand the object of his will, or that which he wills, namely, the thing willed; not his will itself, which is not a thing yet to be done, but eternal, as his own very being itself. And again, that you may easily apprehend, it is our duty willed by him, and not mere events, that must be understood to be the object of this will, namely, wherein we have a part to act; otherwise how are we said to do his will? Of this, every sincere christian must be the active instrument. All creatures, whether they will or no, whether they design any such thing, or design it not, must be the passive subjects, upon which his will takes place. But to be the active instrument thereof, is, in fact, the business only of a devoted person, one given up to God in Christ. Such only are in an immediate capacity, or promptitude to do the will of God, intentionally, and with their own design; though it be the undoubted duty of all, who are naturally capable thereof.

Will this rebel-world never consider this! that are in a continual war with him, in whose hands is their breath, on this

high point, whose will shall be supreme! And dread not the issue of so unequal a combat, between omnipotence and an earthen potsherd! Nor bethink themselves what woes impend, and hang over their guilty heads, for so mad insolence, as striving with their Maker! Isai. 45. 9. Will they never consider it, that pretend subjection to him? when their very pretence is a mockery! and that affront him with the frequent repetition of that ludicrous petition, "Thy will be done on earth" amidst their open, contemptuous oppositions thereto! But I shall apply myself to consider the latter of these; that patience, in the expectation of the blessedness of the heavenly estate, is very needful to every sincere and thorough christian.—And in speaking to this, I shall—give some account of this patience, according as it is to have this exercise, in expecting future blessedness: and—labour to evince to you the necessity of it; how needful a thing it is to any serious and thorough christian. And so the use will ensue.

I. I shall give some account of this patience, as it is to be exercised in the present case. We might, indeed, assign a third occasion of exercising patience, besides *suffering* present incumbent evils, and *expecting* a future hoped good, namely, *doing* the good which belongs to the duty of our present state, which the text points out to us in what it interposes, "after ye have done the will of God," and which is intimated, when we are charged not to be weary of well-doing, (Gal. 6. 9.) and, by a patient continuance in well-doing to seek honour, glory, immortality, &c. (Rom. 2. 7.) and to run with patience the race set before us, (Heb. 12. 1.) when also the good ground is said to bring forth with patience, Luke 8. 15. But considering the pleasure, which doing good contains in itself, and that the patience it gives occasion for, is accidental, and arises from the other two, either the sufferings, to which doing good often exposes; or the expectation of a greater good in a perfect state; when also all indisposition and lassitude shall perfectly cease; we need not make this a distinct head. Or, however, our present design confines us, chiefly, to the patience that is to be exercised in the expectation of our final good, namely—*blessedness*—and in speaking hereto, I shall—lay down some things more generally, and—thence proceed to what will more particularly concern the matter in hand.

1. There are some things more generally to be considered, which, though more remotely, will aptly serve our purpose.

(1.) That the natural constitution of the human soul disposeth it, equally to covet and pursue a desirable good, as to regret and shun a hurtful evil. This is plain to any that understand their own natures, and take any notice of the most connatural motions and operations of their inward man.

(2.) That the want of such a desirable and suitable good, undertood to be so, is as truly afflicting and grievous, as the pressure of a present evil.

(3.) That an ability to bear that want, is as real and needful an endowment, as the fortitude, by which we endure a painful evil. Yea, and it may be as sensibly painful, the pain of thirst, being as grievous, as that of a wound or bruise. Therefore the ability to bear it, without despondency, or any perturbation, or discomposure of spirit, call it by what name you will, is a most desirable advantage and benefit to any man.

(4.) That, therefore, it equally belongs to patience, to be exercised in the one case, as well as in the other. And the general nature of it being found in each, as we shall further see hereafter, the name is, with equal fitness, common to both, and to be given alike to either of them. For what do names serve for, but to express the natures of things as near as we can? These generals being thus premised, I shall

2. Proceed more distinctly to give account of patience, according to this notion of it, by shewing—what it supposes: and—wherein it consists.

(1.) What it supposes, as it hath its exercise this way, namely, in the expectation of the blessedness of the future state.

[1.] That blessedness, truly so called, be actually understood and apprehended by the expectants, as a real and most desirable good to them. They can, otherwise, never think themselves to need patience, in expecting it. To the blind, befooled world, true blessedness is a frightful thing. They run from it as a *mormo*, or some terrible appearance. Religion, that is, nearness to God, and inward conversation with him, (which we will not say hath affinity with it, but contains it, or is the same thing) they dread as a formidable darkness, or the shadow of death. Therefore they say to God, "Depart from us." Whereupon it is not the want of this blessedness, but the thing itself, so monstrously misunderstood, that gives exercise to their patience; nor have they patience enough for it. The divine presence they cannot endure.

[2.] The delays and deferring of this blessedness must be an afflicting and felt grievance. Otherwise patience can have no place or exercise about it. Paganish morality hath taught us, *Nulla est Virtus quæ non sentis perpeti: it is no virtue at all to bear that which I do not feel.* (Seneca.) A stone, if it bear the most heavy weight, yet feels it not. And, saith that instructive writer, we ascribe not to the virtuous man the hardness of a stone. If I have no feeling of a grievance in the deferred blessedness of the future state, I have no use for patience in expecting it. Hope deferred (saith one divinely wise) makes

the heart sick. There will be a sickness at the heart, by the delay of what I hope for, most of all, when the sum of my blessedness is the thing hoped for, and still deferred. The delay must be as grievous, as the attainment is pre-apprehended to be pleasant and joyous; namely, that when it comes, it is a tree of life: so the gratefulness of enjoyment is, in the opposite sentence, (Prov. 13. 12.) set against the heart-sickness of expectation. They that never felt their hearts sick with the desire of heaven, and the blessedness of that state, cannot conceive of it a tree of life before-hand, nor ever know what patience in expecting it signifies, in the mean time. These things being supposed unto this patience, we next come to shew,

(2.) Wherein it consists. And are here to consider, that its more special nature cannot be understood, without taking some previous short notice of its general nature, or what it hath in it, common to it with other patience under the same name. Its more general notion seems not capable of any fitter expression, than an ability becomingly to endure. But because that may be without or with reference to God; this latter we are to single out, for the subject of our present discourse, as that which the text expressly intends: Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye may receive the promise. And its reference to God may be twofold, namely, both as he is the Author and the Object of it.

[1.] As he is the Author. Inasmuch as it is a most useful principle and disposition of soul, which, with a compassionate regard to the exigency of our present state, God is pleased to implant in such, as he hath a favour for, that they may not be exposed, as a vessel in a wide and stormy sea, unable, otherwise, to endure, and under a necessity of sinking, or of being broken in pieces. In their make and frame, they are fitted to their state, even by gracious vouchsafement: and therefore is this fitly reckoned a divine grace. We find it placed among the fruits of the Spirit, (Gal. 5. 22.) and are therefore to count it, as that is the Spirit of grace, a most needful and excellent grace of that blessed Spirit, by which, duly exercised, the soul is composed unto a right temper, not only in bearing the evils of this present state; but in waiting for the blessedness of the future. And thus we consider it as, not only, a rational temperament, that may, in great part, take its rise from ourselves, and the sober use of our own thoughts, (which yet it unbecomes us not to employ to this purpose) but also as a gratuitous donation, a gift of the good Spirit of God. And hereof there is a not obscure intimation in the text, telling us we have need of patience. It is grace, or merciful vouchsafement, that considers what we do need. Whence, therefore, we hear of a throne of grace, whi-

ther we are to come for mercy, and grace, to help in time of need. Heb. 4. 16.

And, as such, how fitly is its nature signified in the mentioned place by the word μακροθυμια *longanimity*; which we read, less properly, long-suffering; there being no notion of suffering in the word; taking also θυμος, or *animus*, in present composition, as not only signifying mind, as that denotes the understanding faculty, or mere intellect; but lively desire, a certain vigour, and strength of spirit, zeal, hope, courage, fortitude, an unaptness to a yielding succumbency; and this (as the other word signifies) through a long space, or tract of time. When desire and hope are lengthened and continued, without despondency, even to the appointed term, and during the prescribed season of expectation. And so the word doth rather incline to express patience, as it refers unto a desired good, that we are expecting and waiting for. And you find it mentioned with other graces, (2 Pet. 1. 5, 6.) by the word in the text υπομονη, which is equally apt to express a permanent waiting, or expectation of good, as suffering of incumbent evil. But also, if we consider that context, we there may discern its heavenly descent, and its being a part of the offspring of God among men. For immediately, upon the mention of a divine nature participated (or a godly frame and habit of soul) that carries a man up, or enables him to emerge, and escape the pollutions of this impure world; besides this escape, are to be added (not without our own intervening diligence) the several following gracious principles, as branches, into which that divine nature shoots forth, exerts, and spreads itself, of which this patience is one.

And, to shew its divine original, God is pleased to style himself in his word, the God of patience, (Rom. 15. 5.) it is his very image in the soul. For is not the divine patience one of the great attributes, by which we are to know him? and for which we are to adore him? It is that, by which he suffers not hurt, whereof the divine Being is not capable; but, by which he bears much wrong from his injurious, revolted creatures. Whence it is a mighty power, that is said, to lie in the divine patience. Let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, the Lord is long-suffering, &c. Numb. 14. 17, 18. It is indeed, his power over himself, by which he restrains his anger, his omnipotent anger, that would otherwise go forth to consume offending creatures. We cannot, indeed, conceive any such passion in God, which he finds a difficulty in restraining, though speaking to men, he uses their language, and bespeaks them in their own idioms, and forms of speech. But it is owing to the necessary, self-originate concurrence of

all perfections in his nature and being, that nothing unbecoming Deity can have place there. In the mean time, since the new creature is Godlike, the image of God, we hence are taught to conceive of patience (a part of that production) not under the notion of dull and sluggish impotency, but of power, an ability to endure, as before, and that, as having its original and pattern in the blessed God himself.

[2.] And it is also specified by a respect to God as the object. For a deference to his holy pleasure in ordering the occasions of such exercise, is carried in the notion of it. It hath in it submission to the will of God. And by this it comes to be taken into religion, or religion must be taken into it, and be comprehended in our conception of it. True and gracious patience, and every exercise of it, to be looked upon as a part of piety and godliness. We are here not to suppose, that patience, in expecting good, and in bearing evils, must have distinct notions, but exercises only. And, though these exercises are distinct, yet as the suffering of many incumbent evils, is, in our present state, complicated with the absence and expectation of the good we desire; these exercises are scarce ever to be separated. It is, therefore, the less to surprise us, that this ingredient into the nature of patience, *submission to God*, should run into both, as we find a mixture in the occasions thereof. As when the psalmist complains of them that breathed cruelty against him, he says, "He had fainted" (as we translate, for those words "I had fainted" are not in the Hebrew text, but concealed in a more emphatical aposiopœsis: as though he had said, it cannot be expressed, how deplorable my case had been, if I had not believed) to see the goodness of the Lord. And adds, Wait on the Lord, he shall strengthen thine heart, &c. Psal. 27. 13, 14.

This, in the mean time, is the voice of patience. It is the Lord; and, in the present case, it is he that disposes, and orders I should so long bear and wait; that over-awes my soul, and brings it down to a peaceful and dutiful acquiescence in his good pleasure; peaceful to myself, dutiful towards him. Let him do what seems him good. Since it is his pleasure, that I should wait so long, before I shall become a blessed creature, I shall admire and praise him, that I hope I shall be so at last: but, with profound submission unto his purpose and determination herein, wait, till he shall think fit to fulfil this good pleasure of his goodness towards me, in accomplishing my desires, and in answering my expectations fully, at last; when I shall be brought into that state, where is fulness of joy; and be placed at thy right hand, O Lord, where are rivers of pleasure for evermore! The thing is wholly from him, and it is fit the

time should be also. And now, as true patience hath belonging to it, what is so special, namely, a *respect to God*, which we understand to be causal of it, in its *proper kind;* so we may give a further short account of it, considering it—*In its peculiar effect;* (or, as it is called, James 1. 4.) the work of patience, namely, that it gives a man a mastery and conquest over all undue and disorderly passions. It fixes the soul in a composed serenity, creates it a region of sedate and peaceful rest; infers into it a silent calm, allays, or prevents all turbulent agitations; excludes whatsoever of noisy clamour; permits no tumults, no storms or tempest within; whatsoever of that kind, in this our expecting state, may beset a man from without. And this most connatural effect of patience, we see, how most aptly it is expressed by our Saviour, (Luke 21. 19.) In your patience possess ye your souls, as if he had said, it is patience that must give a man the *dominum sui; dominion over himself* and keep him, under God, in his own power. He intimates, if you have not patience, you are outed of yourselves; you are no longer masters of your own souls; can have no enjoyment of yourselves; and, therefore, are much less to expect a satisfying enjoyment of him.

The temper of spirit it introduces, in opposition to angry and querulous repinings, is a dutiful silence. I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. Psal. 39. 9. In opposition to fear, it is fortitude. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord. Psal. 27. 14. In opposition to a despairing dejection of mind, it is confidence; as in this context, cast not away your confidence, you have need of patience. In opposition to immoderate sorrow, for your deferred felicity, it is complacency. Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness; giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, (Col. 1. 11, 12.) as if he had said, O blessed be God for our prospect! and that we have a firm ground whereupon to live, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Rom. 5. 2 It is that, by which, with this composure of soul, we expect, and are still looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, (Titus 2. 13.) knowing, that to them who look for him, he shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation, (Heb. 9. 28.) for then it is that our blessedness is complete when he shall appear the second time. Then all those many things concur, that are requisite to the making the work of our salvation, most perfect and consummate work. And patience is to have its perfect work, in com-

mensuration thereto. But while we are present in these earthly bodies, we are absent from the Lord: and many things are wanting to the happiness we expect. This is the patience we are to exercise in the mean time. We may thus shortly sum up the matter, namely, that in reference to the delay of the blessedness we expect:—we ought not to be without sense, as if it were no grievance, which were stupidity, and not patience: and—that we ought not to have an excessive sense of it, which were mere peevishness, and impatience. Therefore having given this account what this patience, considered in this exercise, imports; I come,

II. To shew the necessity of it, in a serious and thorough christian, from the consideration of—the principles, from whence this necessity arises, and—the ends, which it is necessary unto. It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that the form of speech here used in the greek, χρειαν εχητε, doth directly lead us to consider the latter of these, usefulness, to such or such purposes, rather than the intrinsical necessity of a thing in itself. But it cannot be denied, that, to make a man a complete christian, must be taken in as a primary, and fundamental part, the use of patience, subservient to all the rest. And we find it recommended upon this account, (James 1. 4.) Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect, and entire, lacking nothing. Therefore, what shews its necessity, as belonging to the inward frame and constitution of a christian, cannot be irrelative to our purpose.

1. And this appears from its intimate connection with several things, that most confessedly belong, as principles, to the most inward frame and constitution of a christian. The principles, we shall here refer to, are either subordinate, or sovereign and supreme. And they both make it necessary, and produce it.

(1.) Those that are subordinate, concur in the constitution of a truly christian frame, and, thereupon, both make this exercise of patience necessary, and existent; or make way for it, that it may obtain, and take place with them in a man's soul. They are such as these:

[1.] *Faith* of the unseen state. That faith, which in this very context, the beginning of the next chapter, is called the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. This faith of a christian tells him, God hath made report to me of the glory and blessedness of the unseen world; and I believe it, take his word, rely upon it. I do, as the apostle says, hope for eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, hath promised. Titus 1. 2. This realizes the things themselves, makes them, that are future, as present. It serves me instead of eyes,

and present sense. They are things, in reference whereto, we must walk by faith, and not by sight. That faith makes a supply for vision, as we find it did, in reference to an unseen Christ. One great part of the expected blessedness of the other state is that beatific sight of him, which we shall have; and which, believed, and hoped for, maintains present life and vigour in us towards him; though we have not had the privilege of seeing him in the flesh, as divers had in time past; yet, not having so seen, we love him; and, for that other sight of him in glory, how far off that may be, in time to come, we know not. But though so too, we now, or, as yet, see him not, believing, we rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, (1 Pet. 1. 8.) If I do, with my whole heart and soul, believe God, telling me, that thus it shall be, this faith will operate to this height, a glorious joy; much more to this depth, a soul-composing patience. Therefore are these two, faith, and patience, so often paired, and put together in Scripture; and particularly, with reference to this expectation of inheriting the promises. Heb. 6. 12. And how plainly is the affinity, and near alliance of these two signified, (James 5. 7, 8.) where the apostle exhorting to the patience of expectants, saith, Be patient, brethren, behold the husband-man waiteth,—be you also patient,—subjoins the proposal of the great object of their faith, the coming of the Lord draws nigh. It is the faith of the unseen state (which commences to the whole Christian community, at their Lord's coming) that makes patience, at once, both necessary, and possible; yea and actual too, necessary, because the prospect it gives is so glorious; possible, because it is so sure. Upon the former account, without patience, the delay could not be endured; upon the latter, because it affords continual relief, and strength, that one may be capable of enduring, and actually endure. We more easily bear the delay of the most excellent things, whereof we are sure at last. Out of the very eater itself, comes forth meat, and sweetness.

[2.] Nor shall we unfitly add *hope* to faith. We learn them to be distinguishable, finding them distinctly mentioned, as two of that great triad of prineiples, said to abide, 1 Cor. 13. 13. Nor shall be at a loss how to distinguish them, if we consider faith, as more directly respecting the ground upon which we rest, the divine testimony or revelation; hope, the object unto which we, thereupon, reach forward in desire and expectation. And, as we see how this latter is complicated with faith; so we may see how it connects with patience, Rom. 8. 24, 25. We are saved by hope; but hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he

yet hope for it. But if we hope for that which we see not; then do we, with patience, wait for it.

And, if we follow the thread of discourse through this context, and observe how it begins; We are saved by *hope*; and how it terminates in *patience:* it is obvious to collect, that were it not for patience, we were lost! And may so learn how further to understand our Saviour's words, Luke 21. 19. In your patience, possess you your own souls; namely, as possessing, or keeping, stands opposed to losing. They that cannot endure to the end, cannot be saved. So is the new creature composed by a contexture of principles, to be, under God, a self-preserving thing.

[3.] *Love* is another great constituent of the Christian frame, as such, that makes patience necessary; as much patience is requisite to make them endure one another's absence, who are very cordial lovers of one another. Nothing is more essential in the constitution of a sincere christian, than divine love: it is the very heart and soul of the new-creature. Love desiring after God, as my supreme good; love delighting, and acquiesing in him above all, according to my present measure of enjoyment of him; which being very imperfect, makes my patience most absolutely necessary, till it can be perfect. If I have not patience, how can I endure the absence of him, whom I love better than myself? And that love of him doth connote, and carry along with it, the extinction of the love of this present world, so that it shall not longer be predominant; its predominancy being inconsistent with the love of God. Love not this world—if any man love this world, the love of the Father is not in him, 1 John 2. 15. Now when a soul is mortified to the love of this world, it is not hereby quite stupified; love is not destroyed, but turned to another, and its more proper object; and is so much the more intense God-ward, by how much the more it is drawn, and taken off from all inferior things. Thereupon it must be so much the more grievous to to be kept off from him; and that grievance cannot be borne without patience. For that which aggrieves is the absence of my best good, which can have no equivalent; and the want whereof nothing can supply, or fill up its room. God cannot be loved without being known: nor can he be known to be God, but as the best good. Though I can never know him perfectly, yet so much I must be supposed to know of him, that he is better than all things else; that nothing that is not superior in goodness to all things besides, even infinitely superior, can be God; and nothing, but such an uncreated good can make me a happy creature. And what patience do I need, to make me content not to be happy? But he were not such a good,

goodness itself, if he could impose it upon me to choose to be miserable, or never to be happy. He only requires, that I wait awhile, that I be patient of some delay.

And hereupon, if my love be such as it ought, it doth not only make patience necessary, but facile too. It corresponds not to its glorious and most excellent object, if it be not a very reverential, and most obsequious love, full of duty towards him, on whom it is placed; if it hath not in it a regard to the blessed God, as well under the notion of the sovereign Ruler, as the sovereign Good. And thereupon my patience, as hath been said, carrying religion in it, that is, a dutiful disposition towards God: the same principle which makes it necessary, makes it practicable also. When he, whose devoted servant I am, hath signified to me his good pleasure, namely, he finally intends me to a blessed state; but that in the state, wherein I now am, he hath present service for me to do; or that he sees it requisite before he translates me out of this state, further to prepare me for a better; and requires in the mean time, I seek honour, glory, and immortality, by a patient continuance in well-doing: My love to him itself, which makes it to appear necessary; makes it also appear to me the most reasonable thing in all the world; and that my heart say within me, even from the power and spirit of divine love, when he imposes this expectation, though tedious, and when he inflicts any thing grievous, I was dumb, O Lord, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it, (Psal. 39.9.) though I could not have taken it from another. We further add, not as a single, but more comprehensive principle,

[4.] *Holiness*, which impressed upon the soul, suits it unto the heavenly state, and so makes it covet it more earnestly. All things naturally tend to the perfection of that state, unto which they are predisposed, which is more congenerous to them, or whereto they have an agreement in their natures. It is so in the new nature, as well as that which is common to other creatures. All things naturally tend to their like. It cannot be less thus with the new creature, whose nature is improved, heightened, and perfected, beyond that of other creatures. It is the divine holiness impressed upon the soul, that suits it unto the participation of the heavenly inheritance. None ever come to heaven, but they that are made meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. 1. 12. They that are made meet for heaven, suited in the temper of their spirits to it, cannot but long for it, and do therefore need patience, while they are waiting. It is indeed but that to which they are begotten. Holiness in general is the product of regeneration. And we find, that in 1 Pet. 1. 3. we are said to be be-

gotten unto the lively hope. Hope must be taken there objectively by what follows, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, ver. 4. A disposition to it is in our very *natalitia*: we are begotten to it by the implantation of this principle, of the new, divine, and heavenly birth. Such are born for that country, born with a suitableness to that inheritance, therefore cannot but have earnest longings after it; and therefore cannot but need patience, that they may endure the delay. And that also connotes and carries with it these two things,—hatred of the opposite, and—a tendency unto the improvement and perfection of itself.

First. Hatred of the opposite, sin. And this makes a serious christian groan; I have a body of death hanging about me. I cannot get rid of the impurities which I hate. And because the very habit of their soul is now so far changed, that they are made holy, they cannot but hate the contrary. You that love the Lord hate evil; it belongs to your character to do so, Psal. 97. 10. And they know, that they shall never be quite rid of it, as long as they are here. And though as sin is an evil against God, it is not to be the object of their patience; yet, as it is a grievance to themselves, the remainders of it are, so far, to be the object about which their patience may be exercised, that they are not to enter into any quarrel, that he doth not immediately make them perfect in the very first moment of their conversion. And as there is conjunct with this frame of holiness, hatred of the opposite, so there is

Secondly. A tendency to the improving and heightening itself: for every thing naturally affects its own perfection, or the perfection of its own proper kind. As nature, in every thing that grows, aims at a certain pitch, at a certain ακμη; so where there is an incohate holiness, there cannot but be a tendency unto consummate perfect holiness. The precept, therefore, agrees to the temper of their mind, to whom it is given, Perfecting holiness, in the fear of God. 2 Cor. 7. 1. This is having the law written in our heart, and put into the inward part. But, as holiness includes conformity to the preceptive will of God, so it doth to his disposing will, being made known. Therefore, when we understand it to be his pleasure, we should wait: the holy nature itself, which prompts us so earnestly to desire the perfection of our state, must also incline us (it were, otherwise made up of contradictions) patiently to expect it, our appointed time. Herein we are to be subject to the Father of our spirits; as to the fathers of our flesh, when they shall think fit to give a full portion. Heb. 12. 9.

(2.) Besides all these subordinate principles, we are to con-

sider the co-operation of a sovereign and supreme principle with them, and that is the blessed Spirit of God himself. He begets, raises, and cherisheth such desires after the blessedness of the heavenly state, as makes this patience most absolutely necessary. You find in 2 Cor. 5. 4. where the apostle is speaking of his earnest aspiring, and groaning, not to be unclothed of this flesh, this earthly tabernacle; but to be clothed upon, as if he had said, To be unclothed, is too low and mean a thing; hereby I only avoid the troubles of life. This can by no means terminate desires of so high a kind, and of so divine and heavenly an original. These were only the desires of a brute, oppressed by a sensible, too heavy burden. But the thing I aspire to, and groan after, is to be clothed upon. It is somewhat positive, and much higher, namely, the perfection of that state, I am designed to, and by grace, made capable of, wherein mortality is to be swallowed up of life. These are desires proceeding not from the sense of what we feel; but from the attraction of what we see; and not from a brutal, but a divine nature. So he next tells us, ver. 5. whence they were. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. It is the Spirit of God working in us, that makes us thus restlessly aspire, and groan. He that hath wrought us for this self-same thing is God. It is more than if it had been barely said, God hath wrought us for this self-same thing. So he might express a work common to him with other agents. As, if it had been said, *He* hath wrought us for the self-same thing, and so might *another:* but *He* that hath wrought us for this self-same thing, *is God.* This is a far more emphatical way of speaking, that is, it doth assert Deity to him that doth this work, it is saying, "None but God could do such a thing." Therefore observe the form of expression here used, that we lose not the emphasis of it. The act—working us for the same thing—is not affirmed of God, as it would in this form,—God hath wrought us.—But being God, or Godhead is affirmed of the agent, as if it were said, he cannot but be a God, that doth work this upon us. The other way of expression would serve to represent an action that were common, indefinitely, to one or another agent; as if we say, "The king walks, speaks, &c." but to express an act peculiar to majesty, we would say "he that reigns, is the king," This expression then, doth not only ascribe, but appropriate the work done to God. What! that moles, such dunghill worms, should thus aspire! He is a God that hath done this! For that such a work should be done upon such creatures! to mould them into such a frame, that now nothing

terrestrial, nothing temporary, nothing within the region of mortality will satisfy; but they are restless for that state, wherein mortality shall be swallowed up of life. He that hath wrought us for this self-same thing, is God. This is the work of a Deity.

Therefore also, are so solemn thanksgivings tendered to the Father, for his having made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, (Col. 1. 12.) which he doth not only by bringing life and immortality to light in the gospel, (2 Tim. 1. 10.) but by giving the Spirit of wisdom and revelation—by enlightening the eyes of our understanding, that we may know the hope of our calling, (Ephes. 1. 17, 18.) shining into our souls with such a vivific, penetrative, and transforming light, as should change their whole frame, and fully attemper them thereto. Now if it be a divine power that hath excited such desires, and given such a disposition; it must be a divine power that must moderate them too; by giving also that patience, that shall enable us to wait for the fulfilling of them. And the rather doth there need the interposition of a God in the case, to make us endure, and patiently expect the state he hath wrought us for, inasmuch as the same Spirit that frames us for that state (as we see recurring to the place before mentioned) doth also assure us of it; who hath given us the earnest of the Spirit. His Spirit, working in us, not only gives us a clear signification of the truth of the thing, but of our title; and therefore makes us so earnestly aspire, and groan for it. Wherefore patience cannot but be the more necessary; and (the whole being entirely his work, who doth no inconsistent thing) the easier too. And so we find in Rom. 8. 23. 24. where it is said, That they that have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, do groan within themselves; they have the same aspirings that this apostle here speaks of, they groan earnestly within themselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of their body. The adoption; that is an allusion unto a known usage among the Romans, to whom the apostle here writes; and therefore they were the more capable of understanding it. There was among them a twofold adoption,—private; when such a patron did design to adopt such a one for his son, and express his purpose to such as were concerned, as he judged it convenient; which was but inchoate adoption:—public; when the action was solemn, *in foro*, and enrolled, a register kept of it. And this was the adoption the apostle here alludes to; the manifestation of the sons of God, as ver. 19. of this chapter. Whereto agrees the expression of another apostle, yet it doth not appear what we shall be; but when he shall appear, we

shall be like him, 1 John 3. 2. When the sons of God are to be manifested, they shall appear like themselves, and like their Father. This is their public solemn adoption, when before men and angels, they are declared sons of God. And this is that we groan for, says the apostle, having received the first-fruits of the Spirit. We groan for this, the perfection of our state; and thereupon would accordingly enter upon the inheritance, being assured, that all his children are heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (as before in the same chapter, ver. 17.) But now, whereas, from these passages, He that wrought us for the self-same thing, is God; that it is he that made us meet for this inheritance: that the first-fruits of his Spirit made us groan for it; we collect, that it is divine power, which gives this aptitude and inclination, and limits it. What is it, that doth so qualify divine power, but divine power?

It is, indeed, too plain, that the influence of this power received into such a subject, a mind in too great part, yet carnalized, and situated amidst a sensible tempting world, meets with sufficient allays, and enough to obstruct its tendencies towards an object, yet out of sight. But all this obstruction, such a power can easily overcome. Therefore we are equally to admire the wisdom of God, as his power, not as simply omnipotent, though it be so; but as having its place and exercise in the most perfect divine nature, in which all excellencies meet; and which therefore is not exerted *ad ultimum, to the utmost*, so, as to do all, that almighty power can do, but what is convenient and fit to be done; that can moderate itself, can move forward, and *sistere se*, stop its motion at pleasure, so as to provide that desire and patience, may in our present state, consist; and that whilst God hath work for us to do, and a station to fill up in this present world, we may not be weary of life; or by the expectation of blessedness in the other world, be made impatient of serving his purposes here, as long as it is his pleasure to continue us in this. So doth he all things, according to the counsel of his will! Thus from the principles, whence patience proceeds, you may collect how absolutely necessary it is.

2. You may collect it too, from the ends which it serves. And I shall mention but these two, which are in the text: that which is nearer and more immediate—our doing the will of God:—remoter, and ultimate—our inheriting the promise.

(1.) This nearer end is manifestly supposed to be so; and withal, that patience is necessary thereto. For when we are told, "Ye have need of patience, that when ye have done the will of God," it is plainly signified, patience conduces to our doing God's will; and that without patience we cannot do it. Not that patience is the proper principle of doing it, but active

vigour; yet the concomitancy of patience is requisite hereto; not directly, in respect to the thing to be done; but the time through which the doing of it must be continued, and the expectation, which, as hath been said, is complicated therewith. To the former, vigorous activity, a promptitude, and suitableness of mind and spirit to the divine will, even a love of holiness; whereof that will revealed, is the measure, must be reckoned the genuine, requisite principle; as patience is to the latter. Therefore do we find labour ascribed to love; and patience to hope. 1 Thess. 1. 3. If we have run well; and it is the will of God we shall lengthen out our course by a patient continuance in well-doing; and not express only a present agility, but patience in running the race; without this we do not the will of God.

(2.) But we are more largely to insist on the remoter, and more ultimate end—that we may inherit that promise—which we see is represented, as the end of that former end: and patience made necessary to the latter, as it is necessary to the former. And can we in good earnest, think of inheriting the promise, which is all of grace, whether God will, or no? And, if he will the end, doth it not equally belong to him to will the way and method of our attaining it? To be here somewhat particular. Two things we may conclude, God doth ordinarily will concerning the way, wherein he conducts, and leads on those that peculiarly belong to him, to the blessed end, and consummate state he designs them to, the one whereof is also requisite to the other, namely—their gradual growth and improvement in holiness, and all dutiful dispositions towards him, till they come nearer to maturity for glory, and a meetness for the heavenly state: and—their maintaining an intercourse with himself, in order hereto.—These things he wills us to design through our whole course, though he is at liberty to shorten, or lengthen our course, as to him seems meet.

[1.] Our own gradual improvement, hereto such patience is necessary: for perpetual fretting must naturally hinder our growth. Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect, (James 1. 4.) It cannot have its perfect work, if it have not its work and exercise this way, as well as others; that ye may be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing. If you have not patience, that you can endure such a delay, you will never grow, will be always starvlings. Do we not observe the method, wherein the divine wisdom brings all things to their ακμη or perfect state? vegetables? sensitive creatures? in the several kinds of both? Do we not observe it in ourselves? and in our children? whom (as the comedian) we should most absurdly expect to be born old men. And as to our spiritual states, af-

ter conversion, or regeneration, what are the gifts vouchsafed by our glorified Lord meant for, but our growth to a perfect man? Conversion, it is true, till work of that kind be all over, perfects the whole body; but the increase of knowledge, and grace, perfects each particular member, or part.

And, besides the improvement of habitual principles, there is a fulness of actual duty and service, to be to our utmost endeavoured, that we may stand complete, and perfect in all the will of God. Col. 4. 12. Every one hath his *pensum*, his allotment of work and time assigned him in this world, though some come not into the vineyard till the eleventh hour. What a sharp reproach is that, (Rev. 3. 2.) I have not found thy works filled up?—How glorious a character is that of the man after God's own heart, that after he had—by the will of God—served his generation, run through the course of service, which the divine will had measured out to him for his own age wherein he lived, he at length so seasonably fell asleep; was gathered to his fathers, as a shock of corn fully ripe. This is the state of growth and service; the other, the state of perfection and retribution. And to improvement and progress, patience is necessary, not only as being itself a part of our duty, the want wherefore, there must infer a maim; but as, also, it hath influence upon all other parts, and without which, therefore, there would be a universal languor and debility upon the whole new man; which is evident from what is to be added. It is through the Lord alone, we are to make mention of his name, (Isa. 26. 13.) Without him we can do nothing, (John 15. 5.) neither grow, nor serve. Therefore further is our patience necessary.

[2.] That so our communion and intercourse with God here, according as in our present state we are capable, may be continued, and his communications to us therein, which we daily need, may not be obstructed. Herein lies the very life of our spirits, a continual intercourse between God and us. But of this, without such patience, we shall be incapable. See how the apostle argues, (Heb. 12. 9.) The fathers of your flesh chastised you, and you gave them reverence; how much more shall we not be subject to the Father of our spirits, and live? Shall we not be subject to the Father of our spirits? We must remember, that he, whom the apostle here calls by a more general title, the Father of spirits, doth elsewhere vouchsafe to be stiled (Numb. 27. 16.) the God of the spirits of all flesh. A most condescending expression! That he, who hath so innumerable myriads of spirits, whose dwelling is not with flesh, replenishing the spacious realms, and regions of light and bliss above, should also not disdain to own a relation to this inferior sort of spirits, that are so meanly lodged, even in frail and mortal flesh; and to ex-

press a concern about them, that somewhat of tolerable order might be preserved among them, in their low and abject state; and therefore allow himself to be called the God of such spirits! This is admirable vouchsafement. And, because he is (in this other place) generally called, the Father of spirits, comprehending these with the rest; upon both accounts, it belongs to him by prerogative, to determine, what spirits shall dwell in flesh, and what shall not; how long any such spirits shall dwell in flesh, and when they shall be removed, and taken out of this fleshly state. And observe, what follows, "shall we not be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?" The impatient will contend: they that cannot bear delay will quarrel, and that will be deadly to them. If we be not subject, we cannot live. He is the universal Father of spirits; all spirits are his offspring. And shall not he determine concerning the spirits he hath made, which shall, and, how long they shall inhabit flesh; as well the time, as the thing itself; or who shall, and who shall not? It is his pleasure, that my spirit should so long animate, and inhabit such a piece of clay; if I am not subject to him, I shall not live? This is severely monitory! and extends far. It admonishes me of danger, as to my final state. For what is here said, hath reference to what is after said of the future vision of God; and our association to the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, whereof want of the patience prescribed, (ver. 1.) through all the whole race set before us, hazards our falling short. But how are we by impatience, endangered, as to our final and eternal state of life! It is intimated, that without being patient, and subject, we cannot live now. Intercourse will be broken off between him and us; he will retire, and withhold his influence: And if he do so, and we pine away in our sins, how shall then we live? (as their misgiving hearts presage, Ezek. 33. 10.)

But if spiritual life already fail, which is of the same kind with blessed eternal life, and is therein perfected, what shall become of that life itself, which is but the perfection of the other? If we cannot live now, how shall we live eternally? If not a day, how for ever? It is true, we are kept by the power of God; but it is, through faith, unto salvation, (1 Pet. 1. 5.) And faith is necessary to support our patience, as hath been noted. This our Saviour prayed for to Peter, that amidst all his winnowings, his faith might not fail. And all this with this final reference, that we might be followers of them, who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promises, (Heb. 6. 12.) which plainly shews, what is God's ordinary method of bringing his own, at last, to that inheritance. And this, in

the context, which we were last considering, (Heb. 12.) is copiously illustrated by the method observed in families; wherein a prudent father considers how long it is fit a son should be under discipline, whereof, while he is patient, he is under paternal care, and enjoys the provisions of the family; but, if he will not be subject, how shall he live? This prudent conduct is not always observed by the fathers of our flesh. They use, sometimes, harsh severities, more for their own pleasure, and to gratify their own passion, than the child's profit. But with the Father of spirits no rash passions can have place. He only designs our profit, and improvement, in the highest, and most excellent kind, that is to make us partakers of his holiness; to make us more and more God-like, and fit, at length, to be admitted into the presence of his glory. And whereas the mere deferring of our expected felicity is some chastisement, and rebuke upon us, for our yet-continuing impurities and disorders; there are also other afflictions that befall us in this our expecting state, which, though they proceed from this world's hatred, may proceed from the love of God, and are meant to work out for us greater glory, (2 Cor. 4. 17) as now they tend to make us partakers, in a greater measure, of his holiness; which, as it is his glory, will be ours; and by his influence, a peaceable fruit of righteousness accrues to us, and grows up in us, upon which we are to feed and live. Now what conversation can there be between a father in a family, and a son, in minority and under discipline, but by wise and tender care on the part of the former, and the dutiful submission of the latter? Or can the son hope the sooner to come by his inheritance, by wayward and contentious behaviour towards such a father! So that both from the *principles*, whence such patience proceeds, and the *ends* which it serves, we may collect the necessity of it unto every serious christian.

III. And now how copious use might we make of so important a subject! But we must contract. We may learn from it,

1. The desperate condition of those wretched creatures, that are of terrene minds, whose hearts, by habitual and prevailing inclination, cleave to this earth, and this earthly state. They can apprehend no need of patience, in expecting the blessedness of heaven. It is no grievance to them not to partake therein. They had rather live where they are; are better pleased with their present state of life. Tell them of patience in waiting for the heavenly felicity? It is language they understand not! Oh! the wretched state of those forlorn souls, whose habitual temper makes them incapable of the exercise, or need of this patience! It may be said indeed, of many a good man,

that he doth not covet death, (which, for itself, no man can,) but it cannot be said of any good man, that he doth not covet blessedness, which, in a general, indeterminate notion, every man covets. But there is no truly good man, none that is regenerate, and born of God, who doth not particularly covet that, wherein blessedness truly lies, and doth consist. For all such are begotten to the lively hope—of the undefiled inheritance, reserved in heaven for them, (1 Pet. 1. 3. 4.) nor can be supposed, when they covet blessedness, not to covet perfect blessedness. Such may, indeed, not yet covet to die; because yet they may be under some doubt concerning their present state God-ward. And so such a one doth not know, whether, if he die, he shall enter upon a blessed state, or no. But, in the mean time, it cannot be said of any good man, that he doth not covet to be blessed; though for that single reason, because he doubts of his title to the heavenly blessedness, he covets not death. Therefore that doubt doth not extinguish his desire of blessedness, but suspends only the desire of death, as an uncertain way to it; because it is equally the entrance into a state of misery, to them who have no title to blessedness, as it is unto a blessed state, to them that have a title. And concerning their present title, they are still in doubt; which way they hope, by divine assistance, if they have more time, may yet be gained. Whereas, upon supposition, that doubt were removed, they would be glad to be gone. But this is their miserable case, whose hearts cleave to this earth, that they prefer it before all the blessedness and glory of heaven; and rather bless themselves from it, than desire to be blessed by it. If they can but live pleasantly, and as long as they would do here, take heaven, and all the blessedness and glory of it who will for them! I would fain have you apprehend the deplorable condition of such men, upon sundry accounts.

(1.)Their temper differs from that of all the children of God; they are quite of another complexion from the whole family that belongs to him. For all that are the sons of God, as they are born from above (ανωθεν John 3. 3.) they are born with a disposition heavenward. Therefore, if such a man could but view, and behold himself, he could not but cry out, affrighted and amazed, God be merciful to me, what sort of creature am I! If God be not merciful to me, to change me, his mercy can never own me for his; I am quite of a different make from all that ever had leave to call him Father! They all love heaven more than earth, and I love earth more than heaven! That a man's own temper should distinguish him from all the divine off-spring! methinks it should be considered with dread and

horror! That there should be a sort of men in this world, that are all lovers of God, as their best good, and longing to be at home with him in the heavenly state, and I to be severed from them all! My heart being strange to him, and always tending downward! This is a dismal thing! A sad reflection to any one, that can, and will reflect; and be so true to himself, as to own this to be his sense, "I had rather live amidst the vanities of this world, than partake in the glories of heaven! I had rather please my flesh and sense on earth, than enjoy the felicity of saints and angels above!" A fearful case! For now you have nothing to do with this character, belonging to holy men, of standing in sensible need of patience, that you may inherit the promise! nor,

(2.) Can you inherit. For as all, so only, God's children are his heirs. They are no heirs who are not his children. Cast out the bondwoman, and her son: he cannot inherit with the son of the promise. The children of Jerusalem above are free; the rest are slaves. Can it be thought worthy of God to have bond-men, and slaves to vile terrene affections, for his sons; can they inherit the blessedness of heaven, that never loved, desired, or chose it? that always preferred this earth before it? Can any be brought to heaven violently, whether they will, or no? Whoever have come thither, first sought it, as the better country. Therefore God was not ashamed to be called their God, (Heb. 11. 16.) which implies, he would be ashamed to be called the God of an earthly-minded generation of men. And will he ever do the thing that he would be ashamed of? So ignominious a thing as to take base sons of the earth into his kingdom (who may all say in *regno nati sumus, we are born of the kingdom* we belong to) for his children and heirs!

(3.) Notwithstanding their obstinate inclination and adherence to this earth, they still live in the continual fear of being removed out of it, namely, if they bethink themselves. And what sort of felicity is that, that can be blasted and extinguished by a thought! That depends only upon a present forgetfulness! How afflicting a misery to be united in affection, with that, as my best good, which I continually fear to lose! and to have rent away from me!

(4.) Such addictedness to this earth, that is, the desire of a perpetual abode here; which is the complexion of all earthly-minded men, who herein never limit themselves: but should they live here never so many ages, they would be always of the same mind, I say, their earthly propension is liable to be encountered continually, not with fear only, but despair; and is

therefore most vain, irrational, absurd, and tormenting to themselves: vain, for it contributes nothing to their end. Can any man's adhesion to this earth, be it never so peremptory, perpetuate, or prolong his abode upon it; irrational, for what is there in this state itself, to be alleged as a plausible reason; why one should desire it to be everlasting? Absurd, for it is to set one's heart upon a known impossibility. What can be more ludicrous, than to contend with necessity, which will at last be too hard for me? to cherish a desire in my soul, wherein I know I must at length be disappointed? And it cannot, in the issue, but be tormenting, and even in the foresight of it; fear afflicts, but despair cannot do less than torment. How amazing is the fore-thought of being plucked away from one's dwelling-place; rooted out from the land of the living? (Psal. 52. 5.) An immortal spirit torn out of mortal flesh, unto which it is now, however so inwardly con-naturalized, as to have no thought but with abhorrence, of any other state or dwelling? That one's soul should sit trembling on the lip, and muttering, "I fain would stay, but must go, and leave behind me whatsoever I loved best!" And not only quit all my former known delights and wonts, but pass into unknown darkness and woes! *Animula vagula blandula &c.* (as he desperately) *O my poor wandering, self-flattering soul, whither art thou going*—into what dismal, horrid places, where thou shalt not jest as thou wast wont!

That a man should thus recount with himself; I have had my good things! my pleasant days are all over, never to return more! And now must I finish them by so violent a death! Driven away (as the wicked is said to be) out of light into darkness, and chased out of the world, John 18. 5. 18. How calamitous is this case! And how much the more, that it scarce leaves room for a rational, or even for a religious pity. For we read in the mentioned Psal. 52. when we are told, ver. 5. of God's plucking, and rooting such out of their dwelling-place, &c. That the righteous shall see and fear, and laugh at them. At once they reverence God! and deride them, ver. 6. And are justified herein, by what follows, ver. 7. Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness, namely, that he acted so foolish a part, in so plain a case; imagining, that wealth and wickedness, in conjunction, could signify more than all the mercy and justice of a Deity! And did therefore that ridiculous thing, so deservedly to be laughed at by all that are wise and just, as to attempt by so much earth to fill up the room of God! That a reasonable, and immortal

mind should place its supreme desire upon a terrene good, from which it shortly must be plucked away, against the strongest reluctance! veneration of the divine *nemesis* overcomes compassion in this case. Pity towards them is not extinguished, but its exercise suspended only, by religion towards God.

(5.) This temper of mind (which ought to signify with professed christians) hath in it a down-right repugnancy unto whole Christianity. For consider, and compare things. Here is a heart cleaving to this earth; but did Christ establish his religion to plant men in the earth? Was it not to prepare them for heaven, and then translate them thither? Hé died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, 1 Pet. 3. 18. And he hath redeemed us to God by his blood, Rev. 5. 9. And to deliver us from this present world, Gal. 1. 4. His kingdom, in the whole constitution and frame of it, is avowedly not of this world; but terminates upon eternity, and an everlasting state. And, therefore, they that mind earthly things, are said to be enemies to the cross of Christ, Phil. 3. 18, 19. Their whole business is nothing else but fighting against, tilting at the cross! that is, counter-acting the design for which Christ was crucified. And can it enter into the imagination of any man, that hath not forfeited the repute of an intelligent creature, or quite lost his understanding; or (if he retain any thing of reason) that hath not abandoned his religion, to think, that the Son of God should come down from heaven, and die on earth, to counteract himself, or only to procure, that such as we, might be rich men, be in friendship with this world, and enmity with God? Here live, eat, drink, trade, gather wealth; and forget who made us, and redeemed us with his blood? Was this the end for which the world was to be Christianized? and Christianity set up among men? And for the founding whereof, the Head and Author of this profession died upon a cross? What an insolent absurdity is it in such as call themselves christians, to live in so open, continual, and direct opposition to the very end for which Christ died!

(6.) And in the mentioned case, their very frame carries with it a direct opposition, and contradiction to their own profession, that is, supposing they live under the gospel, and profess the Christian religion. They fight not only against Christ, even dying, but themselves. And this is that which the apostle considers with so deep sense, and tenderness, in that mentioned, Phil. 3. 18. There are some, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, they are enemies to the cross of Christ—they mind earthly things. But, in opposition to men

of this character, he adds: Our conversation is in heaven. All runs into this at last, they that are christians indeed, have their conversation in heaven. I now tell you of these earthly-minded ones, even weeping, that they unchristian themselves! What compassion doth it challenge! to see men baptized into Christ's death; to behold immortal spirits united with bodies washed with pure water, therein renouncing this world, and all its pollutions, yet sunk into carnality! buried in flesh! where they should but dwell, living under the gospel, where life, and immortality are brought to light, regardless of immortal life; afraid to die, yet void of any inclination to the way of living for ever! And that while they pretend to it, and do really love their death, which their profession obliges them to shun, and dread! (Prov. 8. 36.) So are they made up of contradictions, and inconsistencies with themselves! In the forementioned context, (Phil. 3.) the way, and course of walking, which the blessed apostle observed, and lamented with tears, was such, as none of them that took it could be supposed to avow. They were not professed enemies to Christ and Christianity, of whom he complains. It could be no surprize to him, or strange thing, to see men practise, according to their known principles. But that enmity to Christ, and his great design, should appear in the lives of christians, pierced his very soul; and the more for what there follows:

(7.) That their end will be destruction. For they were to be treated, and dealt with at last; not according to what they did falsely pretend, but what they truly were; besides, that their destruction naturally follows their earthly inclination. They have that death-mark upon them, which is also the true cause why they cannot live. All their designs, and inclinations terminate upon earth, that hath nothing in it that souls can live by; and they are enemies to the cross of Christ, that is to the design of his death thereon, in compliance wherewith stands their very life. For, if they are crucified with him, they live. Gal. 2. 20. The love of this world must be deadly to them excluding divine love, which is their life. In the same degrees, wherein this world, and all worldly lusts are crucified by the cross of Christ, (Gal. 6. 14.) their true life is renewed and improved. Who can think less, is meant by saying so expressly, to be carnally minded is death—to be spiritually minded is life, and peace? Rom. 8. 6. When death is consummate, and finished, their lusts grown mature, and wanting external objects, turn inward with most intense fury, as never-dying worms, on the miserable creature itself: here is the fulness of death!

(8.) Their destruction must be so much the more grievous for having lived under the gospel, where the state, and the way of life are so plainly revealed. There God's design is laid open, only to continue them under such a dispensation here, as the means of discovery, and operation, to reveal heaven to them, and prepare and fit them for the heavenly state, that they may seasonably be removed thither. But this would never enter into their hearts, while the amusements of their present earthly state have more powerfully diverted them, disposed them to dream, and trifle away the precious hours of their gospel-day, rather than improve them to their proper end. To have their spirits remain unimpressed by the gospel; they have got nothing by it, of what it intended, and aimed at: to have lived so many years, twenty, thirty, forty years, or more under the gospel, and have got nothing of a correspondent frame to so glorious a ministration! a gospel, which calls men to God's eternal kingdom and glory, to be so defeated of its great design! how is this to be accounted for? That is the final term of this call, namely, the eternal kingdom, and glory of God, 1 Thess. 2. 12. 1 Pet. 5. 10. He calls to repentance, faith, and holiness, and to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ: but the ultimate term of this calling is, his eternal kingdom, and glory, and by Jesus Christ, as it is there expressed, and from the all, or fulness of grace; the God of all grace. But now, to have an ear invincibly deaf to this call, that stones might, as well have been called to heaven, clogs of earth to turn themselves into stars, and fix themselves in the highest orbs; what a deplorable case is this! What serious heart would it not melt, and dissolve into tears, that from under such a gospel, souls should be dropping down into perdition continually, and we have no way to help it! And if this be a compassionable case to them that behold it, their misery is great that shall endure it!

Great, if we consider, how great the salvation was, which they neglected. Great, if it be considered, how provoking the affront was to its great prime Revealer, as well as Author, which began to be spoken by the Lord; and the divine attestation afforded to the after-publishers, being confirmed by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, Heb. 2. 3, 4. Whereupon it is demanded, how can the neglecters escape? Great, if we consider their odious, and ignominious comparison, and preference of the vanities of this earth, to the divine and heavenly glory! And add, that they perish in sight of this glorious state; not far from the kingdom of God! having it in view!

2. Let us see, on the contrary hand, the blessedness of them,

whose hearts are supremely set upon the heavenly felicity; and who, therefore only need patience, that they may wait till God sees fit to translate them to it. There are many things to be considered here,

(1.) Their spirits are attempered to the heavenly state; hereupon they may daily reflect, and view the kingdom of God begun within them, and live in a very pleasant, comfortable expectation, that the first-fruits will be followed by a blessed harvest; that the kingdom within them, consisting, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, (Rom. 14. 17.) will issue in their being at last received into a most perfectly glorious kingdom; that he, who is working them for that self-same thing (the state, wherein mortality shall be swallowed up of life) hath given them the earnest of the Spirit, and thereby assured to them the inheritance itself, 2 Cor. 5. 4, 5.

(2.) They feel, therefore, within themselves, that their patience is not indifference; much less, that it imports aversion to the state they profess to be waiting for; that they love not this present world, and are loth to leave it. Herein communing with themselves, they can appeal to the kind eye of their gracious Lord; and say, Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee: and that with so superlative a love, that there is nothing in all this world, which they would not willingly leave, to be with him, as that which for themselves, and considering their own interest only, they count to be best of all. Whereupon also, therefore,

(3.) Their hearts will bear them this testimony, that their expectation with patience is understood, and designed by them, as their duty. They exercise it in compliance with the divine pleasure. They dare not prescribe to him about the time, when he will take them up. He enables them patiently to wait, as having formed their hearts to a governable temper, and to be subject to the Father of spirits. And apprehending, that as he is also peculiarly stiled, the God of the spirits of all flesh, it must belong to him to determine, both what spirits shall sojourn in flesh, and what shall not; as also to limit the time of their abode there; how long they shall continue in that mean dwelling, and when they shall leave it. Conscience of duty, in this very case, is in itself a pleasant reflection, and sensation! Whence it appearing, that it is a matter of duty; this is further to be considered by them,

(4.) That their very expectation itself will be rewarded; that since they were willing to wait, though they had real, vivid, desires to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; and that their willingness to wait was not idle, but conjunct with a willingness also to serve him in this world, they shall have so much

the more ample reward in heaven; their very heaven itself will be so much the more grateful; and they shall have so much the more abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom and glory. They may, therefore, encourage themselves from that consolatory exhortation of the apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as you know your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. And if no part of that work shall be in vain; nothing of it, according to that connexion which the grace of God hath settled between work and reward, shall be without its recompence; nor consequently any part of that time, in this our state of expectation, which we had for the doing of such work, shall pass without its relative consideration thereto; if only we had opportunity to give one cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple.

Therefore, to shut up all: let us now apply, and bend ourselves to this one thing; to get into such a temper of soul, as that we may find, and feel we need patience to wait for the blessedness of heaven. If we do not sensibly need patience, we are dead, there is no life in us. If we live that life that tends towards God, and will end in eternal life, that life will have sense belonging to it, and that sense will make us feel our need of patience; we shall wait, not like stupid stocks, but like obedient children, And when we see this to be the genuine temper of a Christian spirit, how uneasy should it be to us, not to be able to say, blessed be God, it is our temper! Which, if we do find, our own sense not letting us doubt, that upon the mentioned account, we need patience; our next care must be, that we have it; which will not exclude our feeling the need of it. For when we find, that through the mercy of God, in some competent measure, we have it, our sense of the need of it, will not cease, that is, we shall never account that we have it as an unnecessary, or needless thing. We shall, indeed, truly judge, with just gratitude, that we do not altogether want it; but shall apprehend we need it still, as that we cannot be without. Yea, and the more we have of it, and are under its dominion, and possessive power, the more we shall apprehend its value and excellency; and how needful it is to us. But that when we feel our need, we may not be destitute of it, ought to be our great, and very principal care. Nor are we to content ourselves with the mere self-indulgent opinion, that we have it laid up (as in a napkin) in the dull and lazy habit; but must take care, that we have it in act and exercise; which is the express import of that apostolical exhortation, James 1. 4. Let patience have its perfect work, as if it had been said, take care, not merely, that you have the principle; as where one

good and holy principle belonging to the new creature is, there all are; but that we have it in its present use and operation, or in an actual promptitude, and readiness for use and exercise, as the occasions that call for it shall occur; that then we be not, as men of might, that (though not supposed to want) cannot find their hands, that is, have them not ready for present use.

Moreover, we are here also to consider, that though patience is needful, as that text imports, upon the account of mere absence, and expectation of the good, that is, principally the final blessedness contained in the promise; and that this alone is a true ground, upon which patience is necessary, if we look upon the case abstractly, and in *thesi*, or in the theoric, and contemplation: yet when we come to the exercise of patience, we actually find no such case, wherein the expectation of this promised good is alone; but variously complicated with many other occasions, in this our present state, while we dwell in such a world, and in such bodies, that must much increase our need of patience. For, taking the whole matter, as may be said, in *concreto*, and as comprehending all our present circumstances, we may be put to expect the promised good, under much suffering for the sake of Christ and a good conscience, as is signified in this context, ver. 32, 33, 34. Enduring a great fight of afflictions-----made gazing stocks, by reproaches on ourselves, and as the companions of others so used—suffering the spoiling of our goods, even our all, as to this world; so as nothing shall remain to us, but the (expected) better, the enduring heavenly substance. And we may thus be obliged to expect, amidst great bodily pains and languishings, the concussions and shakings of our earthly tabernacles, while, as yet, they come not down; the outward man daily perishing, but we know not how long it will be before it actually perish; besides, the more grievous distempers of the inward man, that not being so sensibly renewed, as with many it is not, day by day, 2 Cor. 4. 16. And thus, if we had no other burdens, we are burden enough to ourselves. Whereupon, the greater our need of patience is, the more earnestly we should endeavour for it. And we are to use very earnest endeavours in order hereto, both with God, and with ourselves.

With *God*, by incessant prayer, as the God of all grace; that, as the apostle speaks in another instance, we may abound in this grace also. Another apostle; James. (chap. 1. 4, 5.) speaks of this Christian excellency, under the name of wisdom. It is plain he so intends; for having (ver. 4.) given the exhortation, let patience have its perfect work—he subjoins, (ver. 5.) If any man lack wisdom,—that is, as is evident, this wisdom, patiently to acquiesce in the divine pleasure; under whatsoever exercises, or of what continuance soever; than which no part

of wisdom can be more necessary, or any thing more apparently wise. But we see what his further direction is upon that supposition, if any man lack this wisdom, let him ask it of God, &c. Agreeably whereto he is pleased to be stiled the God of patience, (Rom. 15. 5.) to let us know, whither in this apprehended and felt necessity, our great resort must be. And how kind and compassionate is the encouragement given in the following words of that former text, James 1. 5. that he giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. Is not apt to reproach frail creatures with the folly of their impatient frettings; but freely, upon their request, to give them that composure of mind, which may shew them to be truly wise; and wherein their wisdom doth eminently consist. Moreover, we find, that elsewhere, experience is appealed to, for further encouragement, and as a demonstration of God's faithfulness, in this case, 1 Cor. 10. 13. No temptation hath befallen you, but what is common to man, or incident to our present state, and for the bearing whereof you had divine support. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted, or tried, above what you are able, or beyond the ability which he will graciously afford you; but will, with the trial, make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it, that is, such a way of escape, as will not avoid bearing, but consist with it; and wherein a vouchsafed ability, to bear shall consist; so as that you come off unarmed, and without real hurt or prejudice. And since patience is this ability to bear, how reasonable is it, with a filial faith and confidence to supplicate for it!

Yet, as we are thus by fervent prayer, to strive and wrestle with God; it will argue we are grossly neglectful, or very ignorant of God's usual methods of communicating his gracious assistances, if also we do not, by proper and suitable means strive, and take pains with ourselves, that we may obtain what we pray for. And nothing can be more suitable to reasonable creatures, that are not to be wrought upon, as stocks, or stones; but as men, and christians, capable of consideration and thought; and of such thoughts and considerations, as God's own word, which we profess to believe, hath given ground for; of which considerations there are many, wherewith we should urge our own souls, to the exercise of such patience as the present case calls for it; that is, while as yet we are to continue expectants, waiting his time, for our receiving the promise. In this way we should, therefore commune, and discourse this matter with ourselves. Am not I God's creature, the work of his hands? Hath he not given me breath and being? Was it not for his pleasure, or by his will, that I, with the rest of his creatures, am, and was created? Did it not depend upon his will,

whether I should be, or not be? Have any place in his creation? Be any thing, or nothing for ever? Did not his own free choice determine, in what rank, or order of creatures I should be placed? Whether among frogs, toads, serpents, or men? Could I choose my place and station in the creation of God? How favourable a vouchsafement was it, that he made me a creature capable of thought, of design, of felicity, of immortality and eternal life! Of receiving such a promise, as I am now expecting to be accomplished, and fulfilled unto me! What could be considered here, but the good pleasure of God's goodness? How impossible was it, that so arbitrary, and royal bounty should be prescribed unto? And shall I not now wait with patience, for the final result and issue of it?

But how overpowering a consideration should it be with me, to think, I am not only his creature, but one that had offended him, and how unexpressibly, what I expect, is above the condition of a revolted creature! One fallen from God! in rebellion against him! and by nature a child of wrath! One engaged in the common conspiracy of the apostate sons of Adam, against their sovereign rightful Lord! that were agreed, in one sense, to say to God, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; and were all best pleased, to be as without God in the world! Whence is it to me! one of that vile, degenerate, rebellious crew! that a promise should be before me, and in view, pointed at me,(as it is to all who do not disbelieve or despise it) of entering into the blessed rest of God himself! Heb. 4. 1. Or, according to the nearer, and more immediate reference of the words we have in hand, chap. 10. ver. 34. of having in heaven the better, and enduring substance! And shall I not patiently wait for it? Why am I so over hasty, to snatch at what, I am but dutifully to receive? and with highest admiration of the rich grace of the glorious giver.

Is the gift itself, wholly in his power, and not the time? Did it not entirely depend upon his pleasure, to give, or not to give? And doth it not, as much belong to him to determine when his gift shall take place? Is the substance in his choice, and not the circumstance? The thing itself was infinitely above expectation; and shall it now be grievous to expect the appointed time! There was a time, and state of things, when with me, an offender, an obstinate, impenitent rebel, no other expectation could remain, but of wrath, and fiery indignation. It is of mere gracious vouchsafement, that I, comfortably expect at all; and shall I count it a hardship, that I am not presently told how long? And how relieving a thing should it be against the weariness of such an expectation, that so great a good is sure at last, namely, as that contained in the promise! For is

not he faithful who hath promised? And hath he not so graciously condescended, as to add to his promise his oath, that by two immutable things, by which it is impossible for God to lie, the heirs of promise might have strong consolation! Heb. 6. 17, 18. And when this assurance is given to the heirs of promise, ver. 17. that is, to the regenerate; for if children then heirs, Rom. 8. 17. Nothing can be surer than this, in the general, that all that are regenerate, or sincere christians, shall inherit at one time, or other. Nothing is left doubtful, but the time when, that is, the time when they shall die. For they that die in Christ, are past danger. And the method is prescribed us, of making our calling and election sure.

When, therefore, this is done, how great is the consolation, that one time, or other, I am sure to die? What can be surer? It is not in the power of all the world, not of the greatest enemy I can have in it, to keep me always there, or hinder my going out of it, at my appointed time. Such therefore, our Saviour, under the name of his friends, (Luke 12. 4.) forbids to fear them that kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do. Which is a triumph over the impotency of the utmost human malice against good men; the greatest hurt they have it in their power to do them, is to put it out of their own power ever to hurt them more! and to put them into the possession of the most blessed state!

This consideration, therefore, should, at once, both make us patient of death, when expected as an apprehended evil; and of the expectation of the consequent good, to which it is an appointed, unalterable introduction. Of death, as that which must intervene, and in reference whereto itself, we have need of patience, that we may inherit the promise. For that which is sown is not quickened, except it die. It is necessary we be reconciled to this wise, and equal law of our sovereign Lord, by which, it is appointed for all men once to die:—that we be satisfied and well pleased, that this world be not continued always, for the production and sustenance of men born in sin: that rebels against heaven are not to be everlastingly propagated here on earth: that God shall not thus perpetuate his own dishonours, and prevent the judgment that is to shut up this scene, and set all things right between him and his revolted creatures, after apt and suitable means used for their reduction and recovery. With how dutiful submission and complacency should we yield, for our parts, to this constitution! so as for ourselves, not to wish for an exemption. For how can we harbour a desire in our hearts, which we cannot form into a prayer? And how would such a prayer sound, "Lord, when all this world is to die round about me, let me be an ex-

cepted instance? Let me live here always?" How presumptuous a request were it? And how foolish? For is not the course of God's procedure herein, from age to age, a constant avowing of the righteousness, and of the immutability of his counsel, in reference to it? It is a wretched thing to be engaged in a war with necessity made by righteousness itself, and the most invincible reason? A pagan, represented in the height of madness, was not so mad as not to see this, *Miser est quicunq ; non vult, mundo secum moriente mori ; that he is a wretched creature, that is unwilling to die, when the world is every where dying with him !* Our patience possessing our souls, will not endure there should be such a *pugna*, a reluctant disposition, not overcome against this inviolable statute and determination; which disposition must be equally disloyal to our maker, and uncomfortable to ourselves.

And this consideration should make us patient in expecting the consequent good, whereto death is the introduction; that the expected good is so ascertained to the friends of Christ, that death intervening cannot be hurtful, or be any bar to our attainment of the good promised; nor is rationally formidable; since we cannot suppose our Lord would forbid our fearing what we have reason to fear. But unto his friends he forbid the fearing of them that can kill the body only, and after that, have no more that they can do: but requires them to fear him, that can cast soul and body into hell. It is plainly implied, that killing the body is no hurt or damage to the soul; it cannot separate from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. 8. 38, 39. No, nor the principalities, and powers which, in that juncture, in the very article, or instant of dying, will be sure to do their uttermost to work that separation. And considering this bodily death, as an introduction to blessedness, it not only can infer no damage, but it must be our great advantage. Which is implied in the mentioned context, Luke 12. 8. Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will the Son of man confess before the angels of God. For though it is not the lot of every christian to be an actual martyr; yet every true christian is an habitual one. Whosoever, therefore, dies with a fixed disposition of spirit, never, upon any terms to deny Christ, he assures such he will solemnly own them, even before all the angels; which must include their being admitted into a most blessed state. When also such are expressly told, that all things are theirs, (1 Cor. 3. 21, 22.) and *death* is reckoned into the account of the *all things* this cannot but signify that death is to be, not only no detriment to them, but their advantage and gain; which is also plainly spoke out, Phil. 1. 21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. And that

most gainful good being so fully assured to them, they have all the reason in the world to expect it with patience.

Moreover, how consolatory must it be to them, that have any taste of spiritual and heavenly things, that so pleasant a way is prescribed them of living, through the whole time of their expecting state, that is, as long as they live in the flesh, namely, to live by faith in the Son of God. Gal. 2. 20. How unspeakable is the joy and pleasure of that way of living! That all the days of our abode in the flesh, we have so great a one as the glorious ever-blessed Son of God to depend upon! by continual, and often repeated vital acts, resigning ourselves to his conduct and government, and deriving from that fulness, which it pleased the Father should dwell in him, all needful supplies of grace, spirit, life, and righteousness; and that we are taught to consider him, not as a stranger, or one unrelated to us, or uneoncerned for us; but who hath loved us, and (which is the highest evidence hereof) given himself for us, that great, rich, and glorious self! In whom, therefore, our faith may not only repose, and acquiesce, but triumph and glory! And that we may do thus, not by rare, unfrequent, and long intermitted intervals; but as long as we breathe in mortal flesh, even to the last breath! Should such a way of living be tedious, and irksome to us? Though we expect long, we are not to expect, as forlorn creatures, without Christ, and without hope, and without God in the world! Therefore, in how high transports of spirit should we exult, and bless God, who hath so stated our case; endeavouring to our uttermost, and earnestly aspiring to that excellent temper of spirit, (Col. 1. 11, 12.)—to be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience, and long suffering, with joyfulness, giving thanks.—And how overpowering a consideration should this be with us? What? am I to aim at that high pitch of all patience, and long-suffering with joyfulness; and, instead of repining to give thanks; and have I not attained so far, as to meet patience! My not being able to endure the enjoined expectation, should make me not endure myself!

AN

APPENDIX

Containing some memorial of

DOCTOR HENRY SAMPSON,

A LATE

Noted Physician

IN THE

CITY OF LONDON.

ALTHOUGH the foregoing discourse is grounded upon the same text of Scripture, that was insisted on, soon after the notice was brought me of this worthy person's decease, and upon the occasion thereof; yet this discourse itself, cannot admit to be called a funeral sermon. The frequent, and inward conversation I had with him, divers years, gave me ground to apprehend, that the temper and complexion of his mind and spirit, did very much agree with the sense and import of this text; which, when I heard of his death, first led my thoughts to it; and was my inducement to say something of it in public, with some particular reference to him, in whom I had seen an exemplification of it in an eminent degree. But of what was then said, I could now give no distinct account. For having then no thought of its further publication, and my own long languishings, presently ensuing; what was spoken upon that occasion, was with me lost. Nor was it afterwards decent to offer at publishing a sermon, for the funeral of one, though very dear to me, that was deceased so long before. Yet God affording me, at length, some respiration from the extremity of those painful distempers that had long afflicted me; apprehending, that a discourse upon this subject might be of some use to divers others besides the present hearers, I did, by intervals, set myself to reconsider it. And only now take this

occasion to annex some memorial of this excellent person, that first drew my thoughts to it. He was long a member, and lived in communion with many of us, in the same church, namely, by the space of thirty years, under the pastoral inspection of the reverend Doctor Jacomb, and of him, who with great inequality, succeeded him. This he signified himself, in a paper written by his own hand, and delivered to me when we were entering upon the administration of the Lord's supper; the last time that God ordered him that opportunity with us. The paper was thus:

Sir,

"It is my request to you, that you will please to acquaint the congregation, with the great sense I have of the mercy of God, that hath afforded me communion with them, and their ministry, for thirty years together. But now, being, by the providence of God, deprived of my health in the city, I am to seek relief thereof in the country air, and shall thereby be, in a great measure deprived of those blessings; yet I earnestly desire their prayers for me, and my family, that, in some sort of such intercourse, our communion may continue still, if not in body, yet in spirit,

Your servant,

HENRY SAMPSON.

He now found himself constrained by his declining age, and growing distempers, to retire from us (but not without very great reluctancy) into a village at no great distance from the city; but which, for change of air, was necessary, and, as he found, relieving to him. From thence his earnest desire to visit his relations, and native country, engaged him in a long journey, as far as Nottinghamshire. And that journey brought him into the better, even the heavenly country: God so ordering it, that near the place, where he drew his first breath, he should draw his last; and end a very holy useful life, not far from the very spot, where he began to live. For reaching the seat of a reverend brother of his, near to that of his birth, he there found, but for a very few days, a temporal, and there entered upon his eternal rest. So falling a little short of the *(patrias sedes)* the place that had been the dwelling place of his earthly parents, by a joyful anticipation, he sooner arrived at his heavenly Father's house, and found his place among the many mansions, and everlasting habitations, where was to be his proper, and per-

petual home. It is not now my design to write the history of his life, the former part, and therefore, the longer course and tract whereof, must have been more known to divers of our society, than it could be to me; though I have had much opportunity also, within the space of twenty years past, to understand, and know much of it. But that must contain many things, which, though useful in their kind, my circumstances allow me not to relate. Nor shall I enlarge in giving his character, though the subject is copious: for my present infirmities will make my limits narrow, whether I will or no.

But a man of so real value, and usefulness in his station, and of so instructive, and exemplary a conversation, ought not to be neglected, or be let slide off the stage from among us, without some such observation, as may some way answer a debt owing to his memory; and be a real gain, and advantage to ourselves. He began his course, favoured by the Author of nature, with very good natural parts; and very early enriched with communications of the more excellent kind, by the God of all grace. Herewith, having his spirit seasoned, and deeply tinctured betimes, the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, became, near the beginning of his course, the governing principle thereof His choice was, therefore, of that way and state, wherein he, in the general conceived, he might most glorify God, and do most good to men. And because, he thought, he might serve those ends best, in that high and noble employment, wherein he should be obliged principally, and most directly, to intend the saving of men's souls, thither he more immediately bent, and directed his preparatory endeavours.

And, therefore, though in his academical studies, wherein he spent several years, he neglected no part of that rational learning, which was most fitly conducing, and serviceable to this his purpose; yet he most earnestly applied himself to the gaining a thorough acquaintance with those languages, wherein the holy Scriptures were originally written; and spared no cost to procure great variety of the best and most celebrated editions of both the testaments, with other helps, for the attaining of that most necessary knowledge; whereof his library so richly furnished, in that kind, did appear, after his decease, a full evidence: to the bettering of divers other libraries, of such as he had formerly been wont to hear, and among them, as I must with gratitude acknowledge, by his special kindness and bequest, my own. Accordingly this had been his calling, if the way of managing it, could as much have been the matter of his choice, guided by his judgment and conscience, as the calling itself had been.

But things falling out, in this respect, otherwise, before he could solemnly enter upon it; he seasonably diverted from it, to that, which he judged the next best; and wherein the persons of men were still to be the objects of his care. Things of higher excellency than lands and riches; as life and the body are, by the verdict of our Saviour, of more worth than their perquisites, food and raiment, unto which, ample estates and revenues are but more remotely subservient. And the vicinity of this to that other most excellent calling, is so near, that it is an easy step from it, to the affairs of the other. Which we see exemplified in that excellent person, a dear and most worthy relative of the deceased; (Dr. Grew) unto whose historical account of him, subjoined to this discourse, I refer the reader for fuller information: whose most useful and elaborate works may not only occasion us to consider theology, as every one's business; or the calling of a divine, as in some respect transcendental, and running through every man's calling; but that of a physician, as more nearly allied to it, than any other; many excellent speculations being common, and, as those works shew, of great importance to both. And, in which performance that accurate writer doth not, indeed, preach to the vulgar; but instructs preachers. And, as it hath been sometime thought a greater thing to make a king, than to be one, he hath attained a higher degree, above being, himself, one single preacher, in doing that, whereby now, and in future time, he may contribute to the making of many.

These are some instances, and blessed be God, it is to be hoped there are others, which shew, that *Religio Medici* is not always opprobrious, or a note of ignominy and reproach; and that a beloved physician, on the best account, was not peculiar to the first age. That calling gives very great opportunity to a man of a serious spirit, of doing good to men's souls; and I know, it hath been improved by some, to discourse, and to pray with their dying patients; and when their art could not immortalize their bodies, they did all that in them lay, for the saving their immortal souls. And this, I have reason to think, was a great part of the practice of this worthy man. In the proper business of this calling, he sincerely studied the good of mankind; endeavouring to his utmost, to lengthen out their time in this world, in order to their further preparation for the other. And herein his skill was not unequal to his sincerity; nor his charity to his skill: for being applied to, upon no former acquaintance, when the cases of extreme illness, and extreme poverty have met together, he hath most cheerfully embraced the opportunity of doing such good; declaring, he was ready as well to serve the poor, when he was to

receive nothing, as the rich, from whom he might expect the largest fees: his visits have been there repeated with equal constancy and diligence. He equally rejoiced in the success of such endeavours, whereof he had no other recompence, than the satisfaction of having relieved the distressed, and the miserable. And of such, some do survive him, to whom the remembrance of his name is still grateful and dear. Nor were the great advantages lost, which he had gained, for the instructing a congregation (had the state of things, and his judgment concurred thereto) for they eminently appeared to such, as had the privilege of living under his roof; and of partaking in the instructions, which his great acquaintance with the holy Scriptures enabled him to give them from time to time: which, together with his daily fervent prayers, and holy conversation, made his family, as a well-ordered, and a watered garden, compared with the howling wildernesses of too many others.

But in all my conversation with him, nothing was more observable, or more grateful to me, than his pleasant and patient expectation of the blessed state, which he now possesses. The mention whereof would make joy sparkle in his eye, and clothe his countenance with cheerful looks; accompanied with such tokens of serenity, and a composed temper of mind, as shewed and signified submission, with an un-reluctant willingness to wait for that time, which the wisdom and goodness of God should judge seasonable for his removal out of a world, which he loved not: nor yet could dis-affect from any sense of its unkindness to him, but only from the prospect he had of a better. Which made me think him a fit example of what is treated of in the foregoing discourse.

THE WORTHY

DOCTOR GREW'S ACCOUNT

OF HIS EXCELLENT

BROTHER-IN-LAW.

DOCTOR Henry Sampson, was the son and heir of a religious gentleman, Mr. William Sampson of South-Leverton, in Nottinghamshire: and nephew to those two eminent linguists, Mr. John, and Mr. Samuel Vicars, the joint authors of the Decapla on the Psalms. In his minority, he was first under the government of his most virtuous mother. Upon her re-marriage of his father-in-law, the very reverend Doctor Obadiah Grew of Coventry; he was by him committed, at the age of fifteen, to the tutorage of Mr. William Moses, then fellow, and some time after, the learned, and worthy master of Pembroke Hall in Cambridge. Under whom, his proficiency was such, as preferred him to be the moderator of his year. So soon as he was of sufficient standing, he was chosen fellow of the same Hall. And, not long after, had one of the best livings in the gift of the college bestowed upon him, namely, that of Framlingham in Suffolk. Here we was, when he published that correct edition of the learned Thesis of Mr. Thomas Parker, entitled, Methodus Divinæ Gratiæ, &c. a golden book, with a golden epistle of his own prefixed to it; both of them having a great deal of weight in a little room. While he continued here, he made several visits to Coventry, where he often preached for the doctor, his father-in-law, with great acceptation, as well as among his own people. In both which places, his name is, as a precious ointment, and his memory had in honour unto this day. Upon the restoration of King Charles, being obliged to leave his people; he resolved, as well because he was never ordained, as for some other reasons, to qualify himself for the practice of physic. In order whereunto, having visited several universities, famous for medicine abroad, he stayed first, at Padua, and then at Leyden, for some time. In the latter of which, he became very well acquainted with that eminent person, the Lord Chief Justice St. John, who bore a singular respect

to him, as long as he lived. Having here taken his degree, he returned home and settled in this city. Where also, for order's sake, he entered himself of the college of physicians, as an honorary fellow. Among the members whereof, he justly obtained the repute of being substantially learned in all the parts of his profession. Besides other improvements he aimed at, he laid up a considerable treasure of observations made of diseased bodies, dissected with his own hand. Nor did he lose any of his spare hours; as appears by many historical papers relating to theology, left behind him. All which, though they have been long suppressed, partly through his own great modesty, and partly the infirmities of his latter years, which permitted him to finish but few, if any of them; yet it is hoped, that some of both kinds, may before long see the light. His reading and speculation, were ever in order unto action. By which means, as he became, under all relations, in every station of his life desirable and exemplary unto others; so he enjoyed the happiness of continual peace within. And, as he lived, he died; his last hours being very composed, and concluding with that εὐθανασια, *euthanasia*, for which he had often prayed.

FUNERAL SERMONS.

A

FUNERAL SERMON,

FOR THAT FAITHFUL AND LABORIOUS SERVANT OF CHRIST,

Mr. Richard Fairclough,

Who deceased July 4, 1682, in the sixty-first year of his age.

TO THE REVEREND

Mr. SAMUEL FAIRCLOUGH | Mr. GEORGE JONES,
Mr. JOHN FAIRCLOUGH, | Mr. RICHARD SHUTE,

WITH THEIR PIOUS CONSORTS,

The Brethren and Sisters of the deceased Mr. Richard Fairclough.

MY WORTHY FRIENDS,

IT is, I apprehend, a grievous thing to you, to be destitute of the wonted solace you have taken in those your most delectable relatives, the father and the elder brother of a family, whereof you were the genuine, or the ingrafted branches. Whether nature or choice gave you your interest, you had a common concern, and comfort in it; and indeed, from a love too little common to the rest of the world. The love that hath so observedly flourished among you and been your collective, unitive bond, as it hath shewn itself to be of a higher than the common kind, demonstrated its own divine original, and that it had its root in heaven; so have its effects, been a demonstration what such a love can do, for the cherishing of union, not only in a private family, but in the church and family of the living God also. And how little necessary it is unto a union, even there, that there be a sameness of sentiments, and practices in every little punctilio; for a disagreement wherein, too many have thought themselves licensed to hate, and even destroy one another. As God himself was the fountain, so he was the first object of that love with you. And as your love to him caused your entire devotedness to his interest, so your mutual love united your hearts (according to your several capacities) in serving it; without grudging, or hard thoughts, that each one served it not exactly in the same way. By that love you have been undivided in your joys and

sorrows, in reference to one another. While your very eminent father survived, how gladly did you pay a joint reverence and duty to him! what a glory was his hoary head unto you! This your worthy brother was the next resort and centre of your united respect and delight. I donbt not you feel your loss as to both, which (though God had made a former breach upon you) the longer continuance, as well as the pleasantness of the enjoyment, cannot but have made the more sensible unto you. We are somewhat apt to plead a prescription for our more continued comforts, but you know how little that avails against a statute, as that (for instance) by which it is appointed that all must die; nor is it to be regretted that the absolute Lord of all should pluck in pieces our earthly families, for the building and completing his own, in heaven.

What I have said of this your excellent brother, in the close of the following discourse, is but a small part of what you know. It serves for the solace of the survivors, not the advantage of the dead; and the solace is real, and great, when imitation makes all that is commendable our own, and most intimate to ourselves. It is, otherwise, but a faint comfort to have been related to an excellent person; when a limb is cut off, the soul retires to the remaining parts. May a double portion of the spirit and life, which were so copious and vigorous in the deceased, abound unto you! And I should be very faulty, if I put not in for some share with you, who must profess myself a great sharer for your affliction and loss; and

Your very affectionate brother,

and servant in our Lord,

J. H.

A FUNERAL SERMON.

Matt. xxv. 21.

His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

IT may seem somewhat incongruous, and an indecency, that this memorial of our worthy friend, should be now solemnized so long after his very remains are gone from off the face of the earth. But two things concurred to make the delay necessary and unavoidable, namely, that his own desire, expressed in his will, limited the performance of this office to the person upon whom it now falls. And that my own great infirmities, before the time of his sickness and death, (which made it more likely he should have done this part for me, than I for him) had obliged me to begin a course, for the repairing of languishing health, which required some weeks attendance abroad, and which could not be sooner over. But if our business were only to mourn and lament our own, and the more common loss, it were not yet too late. The mention of his name, the worthy Mr. Richard Fairclough, is enough to open fresh springs, calling to remembrance such a brother, such a friend, such a preacher of the word of life, as he was.

And it should do it most of all upon the most common account; whom would it not induce to mourn over this forlorn world, to see that every thing that is more excellent, more pure, more desirable, more capable of being useful in it, God is gathering up out of it? O how much of spirit and life is gone from it, when one such man dies! how are we to mourn over the world as dying gradually the worst sort of death, when the holy, divine life is thus exhaled out of it, and is expiring by degrees? But come, we have somewhat else to do than mourn; all this tends to make a glorious heaven, one bright star the more is now added to it; there is nothing of this holy life lost; whatsoever of excellency, purity, goodness, life, loveliness, and love of that divine kind vanishes from among us,

is but transferred to its own native place, returns to its proper element, as the forsaken dust hath to its own. Heaven hath its part out of every such person, the seat of all life, purity, and goodness; as the earth draws into its bosom its own terrene part, not without a sacredness, and a rich perfume adhering to that also. And as it is not our only, or more principal business to mourn; so nor is it to relieve, and fortify ourselves against mourning. We have somewhat to do, divers from them both, and that is more considerable than either of them. We are chiefly so to consider his death, as may best serve the purposes of our own yet-continuing life, which was the scope of that desire of his, signified by his will, that an instructive sermon might be (upon that occasion) preached to the people. We are to set ourselves to learn from it what doth most concern our own daily practice and hope; so to acquit ourselves as not to neglect the duty of good and faithful servants to our common Lord, nor to come short of their reward.

And to this purpose we are more to consider his life, than his death; the life which he hath lived on earth, and the life which (we have reason not to doubt) he doth live in heaven. Nor could my thoughts reflect upon any portion of Scripture more fit for our purpose, or that was more suitable to him and us, that is, that could more aptly serve to describe him, and instruct ourselves; nor have I known any person to have left the world, within my time, to whom this text of Scripture might more fitly be applied. I shall only observe, and insist upon these two heads of discourse from it,—the character of such a servant, and—the treatment which he finds at last, from his heavenly Master.

I. His character. He is said to have done well, or it is said to him εὖ, *well* (no more is there in the greek text) and then he is further bespoken as a good and faithful servant, more generally, and particularly, his fidelity is commended in reference to the special trust and charge, which is implied to have been committed to him; Thou hast been faithful in a few things, I have not over-charged thee, and thou hast acceptably discharged thyself. Some think this (and the whole parable) to belong only to the ministers of the gospel, the servants of Christ in that special sense. I do not see a reason for that restriction, the words are of themselves capable of being extended further to the faithful servants of Christ, in whatsoever capacity; though being spoken to the disciples, as from the continuation of the discourse (with this evangelist) from the beginning of the foregoing chapter may be collected, it seems not unfit to allow them a more particular reference to their special office and trust.

And here we must note that these words of commendation "Well done, good and faithful servant" do speak both the *truth* of the thing, and the *judgment and estimate* which his Lord makes thereof accordingly. We are now to consider them under the former notion, as they express the *truth* of the thing, the matter of fact, whereof we cannot have a more certain account than (as here we have it) from his mouth, who employed him; was his constant Supervisor, must be his final Judge, and will be his bountiful Rewarder at length. We shall here, in opening his character, note—some things leading and introductive, or that belong to his entrance into this service: and—some things that belong to his performance, afterward.

1. For the introductive, supposed part of his character. He is

(1.) One that hath disclaimed all former and other masters, all in co-ordination, for of such, no man can serve two; other lords had dominion over him, but by their usurpation, and his unjust consent, who was not his own, and had no right to dispose of himself. The faithful servant repents, and retracts those former engagements as bonds of iniquity, by which he will be no longer held, renounces any former inconsistent master, or service. A truly subordinate master he must own, for the same reason upon which he acknowledges the supreme, and do all that such derived authority challenges, by his direction who gave it; otherwise, he hath learned to call no man master on earth.

(2.) He is one that hath, by covenant, surrendered and resigned himself to this great Lord, and his service. Some relations have their foundation in nature, this of servants to a master (we except slaves) in their consent, or in mutual contract. And though this general relation between God and man, have the most deeply natural foundation imaginable, whereupon all are his servants; yet the special relation must have the other ground, namely, that of consent, or contract superadded; not to give God a right to our service, but more expressly and effectually to oblige ourselves to it, and that we may have a right to his rewards. It is but acknowledging and recognizing his former right in us, which is part (and the initial part) of our duty to him. He requires and justly insists upon it, to be acknowledged as our only rightful Lord; which till we do, we are in rebellion against him, and in the condition of servants, broken away from their masters, run-aways, fugitives, and who keep ourselves out of the family; and though that cannot however destroy his right, yet it is inconsistent with our duty, for our service must be throughout voluntary; and with our reward, for nothing that is not voluntary, is rewardable. Therefore

the good and faithful servant, in the text is one that affects and chooses the state, first, and says with the Psalmist (psal. cxix. 38.)—Thy servant who is devoted to thy fear. And (psal. cxvi. 16.) O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, the son of thy hand-maid; thou hast loosed my bonds. He doth as is required, Rom. vi. 13, 19. Yields himself to God, and all his parts and powers servants of righteousness unto holiness. He reckons it neither dutiful towards God, nor comfortable to himself, to do him only occasional service, but *ad libitum*, *at his pleasure* and as an unrelated person. He thinks it not honourable to the great Lord of heaven and earth, but to borrow (as it were) another's servant, nor can he satisfy himself not to be of the family; therefore he consents first to the relation, and enters himself his covenant-servant. Faithfulness supposes having covenanted and hath the samereference to our part of the covenant, that God's faithfulness hath to his.

(3.) He is one that hath thereupon made it his earnest study to know his Lord's will. His first inquiry is, What wilt thou have me to do, Lord? he is solicitous to understand the duty of his station, Psal. cxix. 125. I am thy servant, give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies. To enter one's self the servant of another, without any concern to know the business of his place, shews an insincere mind, and argues he hath more a design to serve himself upon his master, than to serve him.

(4.) He is one that hath an inclination to the work he is to do, when he knows it, a προθυμια, an inclining bent of mind to it: that which the Scripture means, by having the law of God written in the heart, spoken of our Lord himself, in reference to that peculiar service he was to perform: Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, thy law is in my heart, (Psal. xl. 8.) Who though he were a Son, yet taking the form of a servant, applied himself to that severe part assigned him, with a most willing mind; and had, hereupon, the highest approbation imaginable, Isa. xlii. 1. Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. And it is spoken of all the inferior true servants of God, besides, Jer. xxxi. 33. I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. It is the same thing with being God's workmanship (Ephes. ii. 10.) created unto good works; and with that readiness to every good work, ετοιμους ειναι, Titus. iii. 1. If a man's heart be not so framed to God's service, how awkwardly and untowardly does he go about any thing that is enjoined him, he is habitually disobedient, and to every good work reprobate, Titus. i. 14.

2. And for that part of the character, which being a good and faithful servant includes,

(1.) He is one that endeavours to extend his obedience to the whole compass of his duty, hath a universal respect to all God's commandments, is not partial in the law.

(2.) He peculiarly minds the work most of his own station. Thinks it not enough, or possible to be a good christian, and at the same time an ill magistrate, minister, parent, master of a family, or servant in it, if it be his lot to be in any of these capacities.

(3.) He is diligent in all the service that belongs to him, any way; not slothful in business fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. xii. 11.

(4.) He is, with most delight, exercised in the most spiritual part of his work. In the great, vital acts of faith, love, self-devoting; and those most immediately proceeding from them, meditation, prayer and praise.

(5.) He balks not the most hazardous, or more costly part. Thinks it mean to serve God at no expence, or with what costs him nothing. Measures not his duty by the advantage, or safety of his own secular interest; so as to decline it when nothing is to be got by it, or if any thing be in danger to be lost.

(6.) He grudges not that others are less exposed to danger, in their work, than he; and have that liberty of serving God, which he hath not. Let me seriously recommend this property and disposition, of a faithful servant, to my brethren in the ministry. While some have opportunity of serving our great and common Lord, without fear of the interruption and suffering to which we are liable, and when we have reason to judge they do it with sincerity (though we may think they gained their greater liberty, by their mistake) there can be no more genuine expression of our fidelity, and sincere devotedness to our Master's interest, than to behold, with complacency, all the good which we observe done by them. If the great apostle rejoiced, and declared he would rejoice that Christ was preached, though not sincerely (and whether in pretence, or truth) much more should we, when we ought to judge that he is sincerely preached. And if he envied not those that preached Christ, even of envy, how horrid would it be, should we behold with envy, what we are to suppose done out of love, and good-will! They are great admirers of themselves, and lovers of some interest of their own more than his, that cannot endure to see his work done by other hands, than theirs; or that have nothing of that disposition in them which those words express: Let him increase, and me decrease.

(7.) He is much less apt to smite his fellow-servants, or hinder them in their work, unless they will work by his rule and

measure, unprescribed by their Lord himself. He takes no pleasure to see the hands tied up of useful labourers in the harvest, wishes not their number diminished; but, because the harvest is really plenteous, but the labourers are few, rather prays the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest, Mat. ix. 37, 38.

If any, of their own private inclination, would have the necessary work of their Lord hindered, and take pleasure in the exclusion of industrious labourers, for their conscientious disuse of things, by their own confession, not necessary; good Lord! What spirit are they of? I understand it not, nor let my soul enter into their secret! I had rather a thousand-fold bear their anger, than be of their spirit! Would any faithful servant rather wish his master's work should be in any part undone, than done by those he dislikes; upon no more important reason than that their cloaths, perhaps, are not of the same colour with his?

But thanks be to God that, among those that differ from each other in the lesser things, there are so many that rejoice, being under restraints themselves, for the liberty of others; and that mourn, while they enjoy themselves, an ample liberty, for other's restraints, and among whom there is no other contention, but who shall think, and speak, and act with most kindness towards one another: And that not whole parties, but an ill mind and spirit, only in some persons, can be charged with what so much unbecomes faithful fellow-servants.

(8.) He is less at leisure to mind what others do, or do not, than what he is to do himself. Is above all things solicitous to prove his own work, that he may have rejoicing in himself, and not in another, Gal. vi. 4.

(9.) He esteems the utmost he can do but little, and counts, when he hath done his best, he is an unprofitable servant.

(10.) He approves himself, in all that he doth, to the eye of his great Master. Here we cannot serve too much with eye-service, or be too apprehensive of the constant inspection of our heavenly Lord. One may be too much a pleaser of men, but no man can too much study to please, and approve himself to the eye of God.

(11.) He laments lost time, and labours to redeem it.

(12. He greatly rejoices in the success of his work. If, for instance, it be his business to bring home souls to God, nothing is more grateful to him than to prosper in it. My beloved, my joy, and my crown—(Phil. iv. 1.) So he counts such as he can make proselytes to Christ. I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in truth, iii. John. 4. It is said of Barnabas, (a great number believing, and turning to the Lord

Acts xi. 22, 23.) that, when he saw the grace of God, he was glad; for (it is added) he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.

(13.) He loves his work, and his Master, is willing to have his ear bored, and serve him for ever. If any thought arises of changing, he presently represses it, by some seasonable check and counter-thought,* and confirms his resolution of cleaving to him unto the end.

(14.) He puts the highest value upon such present encouragements, from his Lord, as are most expressive of peculiar favour. The blessed God knows what is most suitable to the genius, and spirit of his own new creature. They who are his sincere servants, are his sons too, born of him; and to the divine and heavenly nature in them those things are most agreeable that are most spiritual, and whereof others, of terrene minds, no more know the value, than that dunghill-creatures did of the gem it found there: they must have great stores of corn, wine, and oil. His better born servants are of a more excellent spirit, and better pleased with the light of his countenance; he differently treats them accordingly. As that victorious Persian monarch, (Cyrus) entertaining at a feast the principal men of his army, gave among them costly gifts; but for *Chrysantus*,† a more peculiar favourite (εφιλησε προσαγαγομενος) he only drew him near to him, and gave him a kiss; which was intended by the one, received by the other, and envied by a third‡ as an expression of more special kindness. And of the divine love, which that borrowed expression signifies, pious souls upon all occasions shew their highest value, Cant. i. 2.

(15.) He trusts his Master for his final reward, and is content to wait for it, as long as he thinks fit to defer. Paul professes himself a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, in hope of eternal life, which he that could not lie had promised; and hereupon resolvedly encounters all the difficulties of that hazardous service.

II. The acceptance, and reward which such a servant finds above. His acceptance is expressed in the same words (as was said) which have generally given us his character; not only shewing what he was, and did, but that his Lord esteemed, and passes an approving judgment of him (as it was not to be doubt-

* As holy Mr. Herbert.

——Well, I will change the service, and go seek
Some other master out.
Ah, my dear God! though I be clean forgot,
Let me not love thee, if I love thee not.

† Xen. de Ped. Cyr.

‡ Artabazus, who had a golden cup given him at the same time.

ed he would) accordingly. Concerning this judgment we are to note, both what it *supposes*, and what it *includes*.

1. It supposes both an account taken how this servant demeaned himself, and a rule according whereto the matters, to be accounted for, were to be examined and judged of.

(1.) That our Lord calls his servants to an account, so we find it expressly said, ver. 19. After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And here it is implified, when he says: Well done—it implies he takes cognizance, and inquires whether they have done well or ill, he is not indifferent or regardless how they quit and behave themselves; nor doth he pronounce rashly and at random, without searching into the matter. So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God, Rom. xiv. 12.

(2.) That there is some certain stated rule, by which their doings must be measured. Well doing stands in comformity to some rule or other, and what is the next and most immediate rule of our duty, is also the rule of God's judgment; such a rule it must suppose, as according whereto a true judgment is possible of our having done well. That cannot be the law of works, according whereto no flesh can be justified in his sight; it must therefore be the law of grace: and so this servant is only said to have done well, according to the ευαγγελικα *evangelica*. The *indulgence of the gospel* can say ευ, it is well, to that which the rigour of the law would condemn. *Bonum oritur ex causis integris, &c. well doing arises out of the concurrence of all requisites, evil from any, the least defect;* and so indeed whatever the rule be, all things must concur that are requisite to acceptance, by that rule. But here simply every thing of duty is requisite, so that the condition of acceptance and life was not to be distinguished (as a thing of less latitude) from mere duty, in its utmost extent. Jam. ii. 10, For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them, Gal. iii. 10.

2. This judgment includes

(1.) Well-pleasedness, ευ, it is well, as though he had said, I like well thy way and work, it pleases and is grateful to me, and so art thou.

(2.) An acknowledgment of his title to the designed reward, according to the gospel-constitution. It is said to be well, not only according to the absolute and abstract consideration of what was done; but according to its relative consideration and prospect to what was to ensue; and therefore follows, in the subjoined words, the collation of the reward, of which reward we have

here a twofold expression: I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

[1.] I will make thee ruler over many things. In the evangelist Luke's account of this parable (if his account refer to the same thing, as spoken at the same time, which some of old, upon the manifold diversity, have doubted, how reasonably I shall not here dispute) it is said: Have thou authority over so many cities. Either expression represents the remuneration here vouchsafed, by a metaphor which nearly approaches that very usual one, by which the felicity of saints is represented under the notion of a kingdom, as though he had said, thou shalt have an honourable prefecture, be a glorious viceroy, shalt according to thy capacity, share with me in the dignity of my royal state. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12. This I pass, and shall stay a little more upon the other expression, which is plainer, and without a metaphor.

[2.] Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Wherein, as expositors observe, our Lord slides insensibly out of the parable, into the thing designed by it; using words indifferently applicable to either, but such as wherein he might be easily understood ultimately to mean the joys, and glories of the other world or state. Expressions serving to signify, as an ancient speaks, την πασαν μακαριοτητα, *the sum of all felicity*, as what can more fitly signify that, than joy, the joy of his Lord, and whereinto he was to enter? Let us consider these severally, though but briefly.

First. Joy, as though he had said, The laborious part is over with thee, now follows thy rest and reward. Joy, the very notion whereof is rest, *quies appetitus appetibili** (as it is aptly defined) *they that sow in tears shall reap in joy*. When the dark shady vale is past over, with much toil, the path of life leads into that presence where is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, Psal. xvi. 11. The fulness of joy speaks the purity of it, that is pure which is *plenum sui, &c. full of itself*, and without mixture of any thing else, which hath so entirely all degrees of itself, as not to admit the least degree of its contrary; such is this, it is joy, and no sorrow with it, perfect and most complete joy. This cannot therefore be meant of a slight and momentary act, but a perfect and permanent state of joy; which state is made up by the continual concurrence of a twofold everlasting perfection, viz. objective, and subjective—*Objective*. That there be a perfect, and never-failing good to be enjoyed: and—*Subjective*. That there be a perfect and immutable contemperation, or a thorough undecaying disposition of the subject to the enjoyment of it. From these two cannot but result a most permanent, everlasting state of joy. And of the

* Chrysost: in loc.

concurrence of these two, the holy Scripture sufficiently assures us, when it makes God himself to be the object of our eternal vision, in that other state; and tells us that in order thereto: we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is: signifying all that proportion and agreeableness of the blessed soul to the beatific object, which is requisite to a most pleasant, perfect, and perpetual enjoyment.

Secondly. This joy is more expressly specified, by being called the joy of our Lord; which signifies it to be not only, —the joy whereof he is the object, a joy to be taken in him, (as before) but also,—whereof he is the Author. As he now puts gladness into the heart, Psal. iv. in this our imperfect state, he is not less the Author of our most perfect joy. And—also that, whereof he is the possessor, as though he had said, enter into that joy that is now to be common to me and thee, and wherein thou shalt partake with me. So one glosses the words: *Be thou partaker of the same joy with thy Lord, enjoy thou the same joy that thy Lord enjoys. Amazing thought! yet so Scripture speaks: Where I am, there also shall my servant be John xii. 26. The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them. And ver. 24. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me. And that beholding cannot mean a merely contemplative, but a fruitive intuition. If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (συνδοξασωμεν) Rom. viii. 17. Other joys are in comparison mean and sordid, this is the highest and most excellent, for it is the divine joy.

Thirdly. It is that they are to enter into, which notes both the plenitude of their right, their Lord bids them enter; and the plenitude of this joy itself, they are to enter into it, and the dominion it must for ever have over them, they are to be absorpt of it, lose themselves in it, not so much to possess it, as be possessed by it. And the perpetuity is intimated of that possession, we are told of their entrance into it, nothing of their passing out of it any more; the last thing we hear of them is that they are gone into joy,

III. Now let us see what brief useful reflections are to be made, upon all this, And,

1. How blessed a thing is it to be a faithful servant of Christ! if any have not yet learned to value his service for itself, let them make their estimate by the end of it, and by what is even at present most certainly annexed to it. To be accepted with him to appear gracious in his eyes! An euge from such a mouth!

* Esto particeps, &c. Luc. Brugens. in loc.

Where the word of a king is, there is power, How joyful a sound do these words carry from the mouth of God: Well done, good and faithful servant! The persic version (as it is rendered) most significantly paraphrases this passage: *Dominus pecuniæ illum blande excepit, et cordi verba grata dedit; Euge, inquit, O bone et fidelis serve, &c. The owner of the money received him pleasantly, and uttered words to him grateful to his heart, saying, Well done, O thou good and faithful servant, &c.* What can be more grateful and reviving to the heart of a good man, than that the glorious Lord of heaven and earth should say to him: Well done? to have him say to us, as to Moses: Thou hast found grace in my sight, (Exod. xxxiii. 12.) to have gained this testimony, as Enoch did, (Heb. xi. 5.) that we have pleased God; and that our case might truly admit of such an angelic salutation (though upon a less peculiar account) Hail thou that art highly favoured! how great a thing is it! So great a thing, in the apostle's account, that living, or dying, being in the body, or out of the body seemed little things to him, in comparison of it: he was willing rather to be absent, but is more solicitous whether present or absent, that he might be accepted of him, 2 Cor. v. 8, 9. Yea, and the more abject spirit of a very Cain resents so deeply his not being accepted, that his troubled mind imprints characters of sorrow in his face, shews itself in a fallen countenance, and dejected looks.

What ingenuous mind but knows how to value, even the (unprofitable) kindness of a mean friend? Can the love of a God seem little with us? it adds greatly to the value of mere kindness, abstracted from beneficence, if it be borne me by a judicious, wise person, such a one honours whom he loves; we less esteem the love of a fool. There can be no greater contempt of God, than to make light of being accepted with him. But how transporting a thing should it be, besides the present sense of such acceptance, which (with more or less expressness) accompanies diligence, and fidelity in his service, to have it judicially declared, with solemnity, and publicly said to us before angels and men: Well done thou good and faithful servant? When so great consequences depend, and are to ensue upon it, as that it should be further said: Come, be thou ruler over many things, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, enter into the joy of your Lord. Who would think meanly of being the accepted servant of the most high God? They that finally despise so privileged a state, will see it with their eyes (exemplified in others) but shall never taste the sweetness of it.

2. How easily accountable is it why our Lord lets his ser-

vants suffer hard things, in this world awhile? He may permit it to be so, who hath it in his power to make their sorrow be turned into joy. It is not strange if weeping endure with them for a night, unto whom such joy is coming in the morning; it is unworthy to repine in this case. It is want of foresight that makes any wonder and censure. Consider well those weighty words, (1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.) Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

3. How wicked, and foolish a thing is it to refuse this service! it is horridly unjust towards our most rightful Lord, and most imprudent for ourselves. Do men know what they do in this? whose right they invade and resist? and what cruelty they use towards their own souls?

4. How much to be lamented is the condition of the sinful world, who so generally decline this service, and make themselves slaves, in the mean time, to the worst of masters? how do men drudge to the devil? what slaves are they to themselves, and their own vile lusts? As indeed no man serves himself, but hath a fool and a mad tyrant (as one well says) for his master. We do not enough live up to the principles of our religion, while we consider not, with more compassion, the condition of infatuated mankind, in this respect.

5. What may be expected by unfaithful negligent servants that hide their talent in a napkin? The others joys serve to measure their sorrows, what a killing word will it be, when instead of Well done, good and faithful servant, it shall be said: thou wicked and slothful servant! and instead of enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, they must hear, and feel: cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (ver. 30.)

6. See what estimate we are to make of the nature of God, especially of his large, munificent goodness (which is his nature, God is love) for consider the various emanations and discoveries of it, which may here be taken notice of.

(1.) That he should seek to have any for servants (which the text supposeth that he doth) in this world of ours! A world of apostate, degenerous, impure, impotent creatures, disaffected to him and his government, hating him, and (as in themselves they are) hateful to him. He who hath so little need of servants for any real use! who can do all things with a word! and if he thought it fit to have them for state, and as a thing becoming his majesty and greatness, is attended above by so excellent God-like creatures! So suitable, and obsequious! So

powerful, and agile! Those ministers of his that do his pleasure, hearkening to the voice of his word. A world of ministering spirits, that might be used for purposes less kind to us than they are! That he should seek servants among us! (for his having them implies it, whoever served him unsought unto) invite men into his service, with so importunate solicitation! whom he might despise for their vileness, and destroy for their rebellion, which he can in a moment! And that he should seek such to become his servants, not with indifferency, but with so great earnestness! and use afterwards so various endeavours to retain them in his service! When they gradually decline, that so graciously upholds them; when ready to break faith with him, and quit his service, that by so apt methods he confirms them; when they actually wander and turn vagabonds, that he should be so intent to reduce them! How admirable is all this! View the whole case at once. They neglect his first invitations, he repeats and inculcates them; they faint, he encourages and supports them; they revolt, he follows to bring them back; the cause of our admiration still rises higher and higher. How much is it, in this last instance, above all human measures! Most men would disdain so to sue to servants that forsake them and are loth to confess their real need and want of them (were it never so great) the Cynic [Sen.] scorned to look after his servant that left him, counting it a disgrace, when Manes thought he could live without Diogenes, that Diogenes should not be able to live without Manes. The all-sufficient Deity stoops to that, which indigency and wretchedness think even too mean for them!

(2.) Consider the frankness of his acceptance, even of the least. For how many omissions, how much laziness and sloth, how many incogitances and mistakes, how much real disservice must he forgive, when he accepts them, and says (yet) it is well done? How little is it they do at the best? and how unprofitable to him? and yet that little also he forms and even creates them to, and continually succours, and assists them in it, works in them to will, and to do, otherwise nothing at all would be done; and how full, how complacential his acceptance is!

(3.) Consider the largeness and bounty of his rewards, too large for our expression or conception. So that we even say most to it, when (even lost in wonder) we only admire, and say nothing.

(4.) Consider the kind of the service which he thus bespeaks, accepts, and rewards. The best and most acceptable service, any are capable of doing him, is, when they accept him, take and choose him to be their portion, and blessedness. Trust, love

and delight in him as such, live upon his fulness, and (according to their several stations) persuade as many as they can to do so too. They that, in the most peculiar sense, are his ministers or servants, as they are more earnestly intense upon this, and win more souls are the more amply and gloriously rewarded. They that turn many to righteousness, shine as stars. And for all the rest of his servants, wherein do they serve him most, but when by their converse, and example, they induce others to entertain good thoughts of God, and religion, and thereupon to make the same choice which they have made, and become seriously religious; which is most certainly connected with their being happy, and indeed, in greatest part their very happiness itself? And when they relieve, support, encourage, and help on those that are in the way, or whom they are endeavouring to bring into the way to final blessedness! We as much need our servants, as they can us; they are our living, reasonable, but most necessary instruments. The whole universe of created beings subsists by mutual dependancies, the uncreated Being without any; creatures are made to need one another. Infinite self-fulness, not capable of receiving additions, is most highly gratified by our cheerful reception of its communications.

Let us learn now to conceive of God answerably to all this, we do him not right, that we consider not his admirable goodness, in so plain instances of it, with more frequent seriousness, and intention of mind and spirit, and shew ourselves stupid, unapprehensive creatures; have we a thinking faculty about us? a power to use thoughts? and can we use it upon any thing more evident, more considerable, or that more concerns us? or do we never use it less pertinently?

7. How unreasonable is it, either to quit the service of our blessed Lord, or to serve him dejectedly! Quit it! Who hath more right in us? or where will we mend ourselves? O the treacherous folly of apostacy! and how severely is it wont to be animadverted on! 2 Chron. xii. 1. It is said Rehoboam forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him; and what followed? Shishak, the king of Egypt, comes against them with a great power, and God sends them this message, by Shemaiah the prophet; that because they had forsaken him (ver. 5.) therefore he also had left them in the hands of Shishak. And afterwards, that though upon their humbling themselves, he would nor quite destroy them, but grant them some deliverance; yet he adds: nevertheless ye shall be his (that is, Shishak's) servants, that ye may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries, ver. 8. Since they would abandon God, and the true religion, he would by a very sensible instruction, and costly experience teach them to distinguish and understand the difference, and make them know when they

had a good master. And if we serve him despondingly and with dejected spirits, how causeless a reproach do we cast upon him, and his service? it is a greater iniquity than is commonly considered, implies dislike of his work, and the rules and orders of the family, impatiency of the restraints of it, distrust of his power to protect, or bounty to reward us; and we may expect it to be resented accordingly. So we sometimes find it hath been, Deut. xxviii. 47, 48. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God, with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things, and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

8. How are we concerned to follow the example, and expect the acceptance and reward of any such faithful servant of Christ? And that we may imitate such a good and faithful servant, let me briefly set the example of such a one before you, in this excellent person lately taken from among us; which were it possible to represent entirely, were one of the fairest copies to write after, that this, or perhaps many former ages could afford us. That indeed, which it is fit should first be noted of him, is least of all imitable; I mean his natural temper (with its more immediate dependancies) which no man can have the privilege to choose. His indeed was one of the happiest that I ever knew, and did so set off all that was superadded and inserted into it, by human culture or divine grace, as an advantageous setting, doth the lustre of a diamond. He had all the advantages of education from his childhood, which the pious care of an affectionate, prudent, learned father could give him, that were proper, and preparatory to the function he was intended for; namely, that of the sacred ministry. An office whereof his excellent father (the eminent, holy, heavenly, reverend, ancient, Mr. Fairclough, of Suffolk, whose name in that country hath still a grateful savour with all good men, of whatsoever persuasion) shewed his high esteem and love, not only by the most diligent discharge of it himself, but by dedicating all his sons (which were four in number) to it; and giving his two daughters in marriage to such also. So that he was the father of a sacred tribe, an offspring and race of ministers, or that (even naturally) united with such. This was the eldest of his children, and of whose education the first care was to be taken. Scarce any mind could be more receptive of the proper impressions, from an ingenuous institution. About twelve years he continued student (whereof divers, a fellow) and great ornament of Emanuel-College, in Cambridge, as he was also

much adorned by it. He went from it furnished with such a stock of rational, substantial, as well as polite literature, that shewed him to have been no loiterer there. He was a man of a clear, distinct understanding, of a very quick, discerning and penetrating judgment, that would, on a sudden (as I have sometimes observed in discourse with him) strike through knotty difficulties, into the inward centre of truth, with such a felicity that things seemed to offer themselves to him, which are wont to cost others a troublesome search. Nor were his notions merely book-learned, borrowed from systems, and taken on trust, but formed by a due (but more speedy) comparing of things; as if truth were more a kin, and connatural to him than to most others, sooner digested, made his own, and inwrought into the temper and habit of his mind. Which afterwards, he liked not to muddy and discompose by busy agitations with others, about that truth which he found himself in a pleasant secure possession of; nor to contend concerning that which he had not found it necessary to contend for. He declined controversy, not from inability, but dislike; for as he less needed it for a further good end, so he was most remote from loving it for itself; he was satisfied to have attained his end, and was better pleased to know, than to seem to others that he knew. He was of curious sublime fancy, and a lofty style both in speaking, and writing, even in his most familiar letters; though he industriously depressed it, in his popular sermons, and other negotiations with those of meaner capacity.

But his moral, and holy excellencies were his chief lustre, being in themselves of a more excellent kind, and shining in him in a very eminent degree. The bent of his soul was towards God, I never knew any man under the more constant governing power of religion, which made it be his business both to exercise, and diffuse it to his uttermost; he was a mighty lover of God and men, and being of a lively active spirit, that love was his facile, potent mover to the doing even of all the good that could be thought (in an ordinary way) possible to him, and more than was possible to most other men. To give a true succinct account of the complexion of his soul, he was even made up of life and love. Such was the clearness and sincerity of his spirit, his constant uprightness and integrity, so little darkened by an evil conscience (and indeed, little overclouded with melancholy fumes) that he seemed to live in the constant sense of God's favour and acceptance, and had nothing to do but to serve him with his might; whence his spirit was formed to an habitual cheerfulness, and seemed to feel within itself a continual calm. So undisturbed a serenity hath, to my observation, rarely been discernable in any man; nor was his

a dull, sluggish peace, but vital, and joyous; seldom hath that been more exemplified in any man, (Rom. viii. 6.) To be spiritually minded is life, and peace. Seldom have any lived more under the government of that kingdom, which stands in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. His reverence of the divine majesty was most profound, his thoughts of God high and great, that seemed totally to have composed him to adoration, and even made him live a worshipping life: he was not wont to speak to God, or of him at a vulgar rate, he was most absolutely resigned and given up to him; devotedness to his interest, acquiescence in his wisdom and will, were not mere precepts with him, but habits. No man could be more deeply concerned about the affairs of religion, and God's interest in the world; yet his solitude was tempered with that stedfast trust, that it might be seen the acknowledged verities of God's governing the world, superintending and ordering all human affairs, by wise and steady counsel, and almighty power, which in most others are but faint notions, were with him turned into living sense, and vital principles, which governed his soul! Whereupon his great reverence of the majesty of God, falling into a conjunction with an assured trust, and sense of his love and goodness, made that rare and happy temperament with him, which I cannot better express than by a pleasant seriousness. What friend of his did ever, at the first, congress, see his face but with a grave smile? when unexpectedly and by surprise he came in among his familiar friends, it seemed as if he had blest the room, as if a new soul, or some good genius were come among them.

I need not tell them that survive, who were nearest to him, how pleasant a relative he was, nor doth any man need to tell me how pleasant a friend! No man ever more understood, than he, the ingenuities, and delights of friendship, especially the high pleasure of gratifying and obliging another; the relishes whereof were so delicious to him, that no festival could be so grateful to any man as the opportunity was to him of making another taste, and feel his kindness. Nor did I ever observe any thing so like a frequent fault in him, as an aptness to overvalue his friend. He was a man of most punctual scrupulous fidelity, his word was ever with him so strictly sacred, that, in the smallest matters, his appointments, though numerous, were through his great prudence so sure, that one might, without the intervenience of extraordinary providence, as certainly expect them, as the returns of day and night. So that they who knew him, though most delighted with his society, were never wont to urge for his stay with them, beyond his prefixed time (which he com-

monly mentioned at his first entrance) knowing it would be in vain.

He was of a large and great soul, comprehensive of the interests of God, the world, the church, his country, his friends, and (with a peculiar concernedness) of the souls of men, ready to his uttermost to serve them all: made up of compassion towards the distressed, of delight in the good, and of general benignity towards all men. He had a soul, a life, a name, darkened with no cloud but that of his own great humility, which clouded him only to himself, but beautified and brightened him in the eyes of all others: a humility that allowed no place with him to any aspiring design, or high thought, that could ever be perceived by word, look, or gesture; except the high thoughts and designs which neither ought to be excluded, nor repressed. His greatest ambition was to do good, and partake it in the highest, and the best kind of it; to make the nearest approaches he could to the pattern and fountain of all goodness. And now looking upon so qualified a person, as engaged by office in a peculiar sort of service to Christ, to gather and draw in souls to him, and prepare them for a blessed eternity; how great things may we expect? What do we not find? Mells in Somersetshire was his first, and only (public) station. Thither he was brought, by so peculiar a conduct and direction of providence, as seemed to carry with it some signification what great use he was afterwards to be of, in that place. The very reverend Dr. Whichcot, being also at that time fellow of the same college in Cambridge, and presented to a living in that country, that was in the disposition of that college; obtained of him to accompany him in a journey to visit, and make some trial of the people, he had been designed to take the charge of. Where that so accomplished person expressed a resolution fit to be exemplary to others, of profoundest learning (and which was strictly afterwards followed by this his chosen companion) preaching his first sermon (as himself was pleased to tell me) upon those words: I determined to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. After some time spent together here, the doctor's affairs recalling him, for the present to Cambridge; he prevailed with our worthy friend to stay behind, and supply his absence among his people.

What follows, I was informed of by another hand, but one so nearly related to this our dear deceased friend, and so well acquainted with the more desirable occurrences of his life, as not to leave me in doubt concerning so momentous a thing, as how he came to be settled in a country so remote from his own, and where he was so mere a stranger. And it fell out

thus, during his abode upon this occasion, in those parts, a noted gentleman, the patron of the rectory of Mells, being at that time high sheriff of the county, sent to Mr. Fairclough (of whose worth, fame had not let him long be ignorant) desiring him to preach the assize sermon; some circumstances having also brought the matter within so narrow a compass, that the straits of time made it necessary to press the request with more importunity than could admit of a denial. That performance was so highly acceptable, and so newly over, when the patron was surprised with the tidings of the death of the former rector of Mells; that he immediately told our worthy friend, he could not otherwise so fitly gratify him for his sermon, as by conferring upon him such a living, which, if he pleased to accept it, was his.

The opportunity of stated service, in a calling to which he had most seriously devoted himself, more than the emolument (as did afterwards sufficiently appear) soon determined his thoughts, and fixed him in this station. There he shone many years a bright and a lively light, a burning, as well as shining one; it was soon observed what a star was risen in that horizon, and a confluence was quickly gathered of such as rejoiced in the light of it, which made an obscure country village soon become a most noted place; from sundry miles about, thither was the great resort, so that I have wondered to see so thronged an auditory as I have sometimes had the opportunity to observe in such a place, that did usually attend his most fruitful ministry. And O how hath that congregation been wont to melt under his holy fervours! His prayers, sermons, and other ministerial performances had that strange pungency, quickness, and authority with them, at sometimes; that softness, gentleness, sweetness, alluringness at others: that one would think it scarce possible to resist the spirit, and power wherewith he spake. And the effect did in a blessed measure correspond, they became a much enlightened, knowing, judicious, convinced, reformed, even somewhat generally, and in good part a seriously religious people. His labours here were almost incredible. Beside his usual exercises on the Lord's day, of praying, reading the Scriptures, preaching, catechising, administering the sacraments (as the occasions or stated seasons occurred) he usually five days in the week, betimes in the morning, appeared in public, prayed, and preached an expository lecture upon some portion of the holy Scriptures, in course, to such as could then assemble, which so many did, that he always had a considerable congregation; nor did he ever produce in public any thing, which did not smell of the lamp. And I

know that the most eminent for quality, and judgment, among his hearers, valued those his morning exercises for elaborateness accuracy, instructiveness, equally with his Lord's days sermons. Yet also he found time, not only to visit the sick (which opportunities he caught at with great eagerness) but also, in a continual course, all the families within his charge; and personally, and severally to converse with every one that was capable, labouring to understand the present state of their souls, and applying himself to them in instructions, reproofs, admonitions, exhortations and encouragements suitably thereto: and he went through all with the greatest facility, and pleasure imaginable; his whole heart was in his work. Every day, for many years together, he used to be up by three in the morning, or sooner, and to be with God (which was his dear delight) when others slept. Few men had ever less hinderance from the body, or more dominion over it, a better habited mind, and body have rarely dwelt together. No controversies arose among his neighbours, within his notice, which he made it not his business to get presently composed; and his help and advice was wont to be sought by persons of eminent rank, and in matters of very great difficulty, and importance, for that purpose. His own love of peace always inclining him, and his great prudence well enabling him to be exceedingly useful, in any such case. Nor were his labours confined within that narrower verge, his name and worth were too well known abroad, to let him be engrossed by one single parish; in how many places did he scatter light, and diffuse the knowledge of God, wheresoever, within his reach, the opportunity of a lecture, occasional, or fixed, did invite!

The state of things, in those days, making it necessary (and not hindering) that what was to be done for the preservation of common order, must be by the spontaneous associating of the pastors of many congregations; how did he inspirit those assemblies! The deference that was given to him, even by very reverend persons of great value, and much exceeding him in years, with the effectual influence he had upon all their affairs, (manifestly aiming at nothing but the promoting of religion, and the common good) were only arguments of the commanding power of true worth. And the good effects upon the people, shewed how much could be done by a naked, undisguised recommendation of one's self to men's consciences, in the sight of God. Nor would his brethren, of greatest value (and divers there were, in those parts, of very great) think it any detraction from themselves to acknowledge much more to the wise, modest, humble activity of his spirit, in their common concernments, than I shall be willing to arrogate to him. He was,

upon the whole, a very public blessing, in that country, while he kept his public station in it ; and when the time approached of his quitting it, he eminently shewed his constant, great moderation in reference to the controverted things, that occasioned his doing so, in all his reasonings with his brethren about them. And it further appeared, in the earnest bent of his endeavours to form the minds of his people, as much as was possible,unto future union, under the conduct of whosoever should succeed him, in the serious care of their souls; and to a meek, unrepining submission to that present separation, which was now to be made between him and them; whereof the extant abridgment of sundry his later sermons to them are an abundant testimony; though such a repression of their sorrows it was not possible to them to receive, otherwise than as dutiful children are wont to do the exhortations of an affectionate, dying father, not to mourn for his death. In the substantial things of religion, no man was more fervently zealous; about the circumstantials, none more cool and temperate.

But he could in nothing prevaricate with his (once settled) judgment, or depart in his practice one ace from it; yet such was the candour and softness of his spirit, that nothing could be more remote from him, than to pass any harsh censures upon those that received that satisfaction in the scrupled points, which he could not : but he continued a most entire undiminished friendship with many of them (and several of eminent note, by whom also it was equally cherished, on their parts) even to the last. His great contempt of the world, and remoteness from making the sacred office subservient to secular interest, a design of enriching himself by it, or more than to subsist, too soon appeared in the mean condition to which he was brought, by that deprivation. For though the annual profits of his living were very considerable, yet his free (but well regulated) hospitality, and large diffusive charity, (wherein his excellent consort, one of the most pious, prudent, well accomplished matrons I ever knew, most readily concurred with him) kept them from being superfluous, or flowing into coffers. He had laid no treasure, but in heaven; and was the son of a no way unlike father, from whom the expectancy of a patrimonial estate could not be great: and whom (to his no small joy while he continued) he survived but a little. So that for some years (as I have heard him say) he did owe much of his subsistence to the bounty of some worthy citizens of London, whose temper it is to take more pleasure in doing such good, than in having it told the world who they were. His usefulness was such, since his deprivation (not in serving a party, a thing too mean and little to be ever thought of by him, without

disdain; but) in pressing the great, and agreed things, that belong to serious, living religion; that it even melts my soul to think of the overwhelming sorrows wherewith the tidings of his death must have been received, by multitudes in the west, that were often wont with greatest delight and fruit to enjoy his most lively, edifying labours.

His decease confirms it to us, once more, that nothing, belonging to this world of ours, is too good to die. But it is a great argument of God's kind propensions towards it, and speaks much of his good-will to men, that now and then such heavenly creatures are permitted to inhabit it, and such *specimina* and efforts of the divine life to appear, and be put forth in it. It shews God hath not forsaken the earth, and that his tabernacle is with men, when any such are to be found here.

It ought to be reckoned very monitory, and a great rebuke, when such are (earlier than according to natural course) taken away. It should make us love heaven so much the better, that such as he are gathered thither; not that it needs any thing to better it in itself, but that we can now better relish the thoughts that arise out of our own present knowledge; and having seen true goodness exemplified, may thence more easily take our advantage to apprehend what that state is, wherein there will be so vast a collection of excellent creatures, so perfectly good, by most liberal eternal participations from the first, and uncreated good. How taking is this notion of heaven? I especially pronounce this holy man blessed, saith a great man in the * ancient church, speaking of an excellent person deceased,† for that he hath passed from one order to another (μεταλαξαλο) and leaving our city, hath ascended to another city, even that of God himself; and leaving this church of ours; is gone into the church of the first-born who are written in heaven; and hath left our solemn conventions for that of myriads of angels: referring to that of the apostle, Heb. 12.20. and magnifying (that πανηγιρις) that glorious convention, not for the multitude of the powers above only, but for the confluence of the good, with a perfect vacancy of envy, and an abounding perpetual joy and satisfaction of mind—love, peace, goodness, &c. and every fruit of the spirit in most plenteous fulness (to this purpose he speaks) and what an amiable heaven is this?

Yea, and it may incline us to have somewhat the kinder thoughts of this our meaner native element, and less to regret that our earthly part should dissolve and incorporate with it, to think what rich treasure, what shrines of a lately inhabiting

* Chrysost. Panegyr.
† Philogonius.

deity (now become sacred dust) it hath from time to time received, and transmuted into itself. How voluminously have some written of *Roma Subterranea!*‡ of the tombs of martyrs, and other excellent persons (as many of them were) collected in one little spot of this earth: And if there were as particular an account of the more refined part of the subterraneous London, much more of all places where just and holy men have dropped, and deposed their earthly tabernacles; how would our earth appear ennobled (and even hallowed) by such continual accessions to it, in all times and ages? What a glorious host will arise and spring up, even out of London? Is not the grave now a less gloomy thing? Who would grudge to lie obscurely awhile, among them with whom we expect to rise, and ascend so gloriously? It should make us diligent in the remaining time of our abode here, what should not the expectation of such a welcome carry us through? Well done, good and faithful servant, &c. How studious should we be, so to acquit ourselves, as he hath done? Blessed is that servant whom the Lord, when he comes, shall find so doing; let us then be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, as knowing our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

‡ Jo. Severanus, P. Aringhus, &c.

A

SERMON

ON THE MUCH LAMENTED DEATH

OF THAT REVEREND

AND

Worthy Servant of Christ,

MR. RICHARD ADAMS, M. A.

Sometime Fellow of Brazen-Nose College in Oxford,
Afterwards Minister of Saint Mildred, Bread-Street, London,
More lately Pastor of a Congregation in Southwark.

WHO DECEASED FEBRUARY THE 7TH. $169\frac{7}{8}$.

TO

MRS. ANNA ADAMS, Widow,
And COLONEL JOHN ADAMS, Brother to the deceased Mr. Richard Adams.

My Honoured Friends,

Death is too common a theme, and too obvious to our sense, to be thought strange, any more than that we live. But that the course of our life, as to the rise, progress, and period of it, is at the dispose of one common Lord of all, because it belongs to a sphere above sense, is little considered by the most. To you, I doubt not, it is far from being a new or unfamiliar thought. And thereupon, that the precious life you have lately seen finished, was measured by him who could not therein be unkind to him who is gone; or to you who stay behind.

We do, indeed, tempt ourselves, if we expect from his kindness, unreasonable things. As that he should, to gratify us, alter the course of nature, or recall the universal commission of death, or only let it stand in force with an exception, as to ourselves, our relatives, and friends, or that he should tear his own most inviolable constitu-

tions; by which the present state is to be but transitory, and the future the only fixed state; which were to subvert the whole frame of religion, to nullify the design of redemption, to take down his tribunal, to abolish and lay aside all thoughts of a judgment to come, and finally to make the kingdom of his dear Son to terminate in a dunghill. While no such wish hath place with you, your reconciliation is easy to the providence that hath for the present bereaved you of so delectable a relation. And the love of God, which prevailing in you, will prompt you to compliance with his will, must be the evidence of your title to the best blessings of both worlds. For both the things in the other state, the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, &c. And the concurrent operation of all things for good in this present state, do all belong to persons of the same character, the lovers of God, 1 Cor. 2. 9. Rom. 8. 28. Which that you may constantly and fully experience to the end, and in the end, is the serious prayer, for you, of,

Your very respectful,
and affectionate servant in Christ,
JOHN HOWE.

A

FUNERAL SERMON.

Philippians 1. latter part of verse xxiii.

Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

IF you should have no other subject for your present consideration, than only, that one in your neighbourhood is lately dead; even that itself would deserve your very serious thoughts. The translation of human souls from world to world, and out of this present, into their eternal state, is no light matter; and does claim and challenge more serious thoughts, than it is commonly wont to find and meet with. Nor does the commonness of such an occasion at all excuse the slightness of men's thoughts upon it; but rather aggravate it unspeakably more. That which we find to be so common and universal a case, we may be sure will shortly be our own: and as it is now matter of discourse with us, that such a one is dead, we shall, ere it be long, according as we have been more or less regarded in the world, be a like subject of discourse to others. But it is a greater thing, when it can be said, a good man is gone; there is a more special remark to be put upon the decease of such a one, Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, the end of that man is peace, as Psalm 37. 37. There is that agreement between his way and his end, they are so much of a piece, and do so exactly correspond; a course transacted in a constant serenity and peace, meeting at length with peace as the end of it; an even course, still, uniform, self-agreeable, ever equal to, and like itself, ending at last in peace: Mark this! how he goes off, mark such a life so ending! But it yet challenges more intense consideration, when such a one

is taken away from amongst us, and the progress and period of his course come to be viewed together, whose life was a continued series of labours in the Lord's vineyard, from the earlier, to the later hours of his day; when such a one has finished his course, and fought out the good fight of faith, and is entered into his rest; by the vouchsafement of his indulgent Lord and Master is made to rest from his labours, and receive the reward of them, the reward of grace, with a Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord!

And sure it cannot be ungrateful to you, to be desired here to stay a little, to make a stand, and pause, and entertain yourselves awhile with the consideration of such a theme and subject as this. Especially it cannot be an ungrateful contemplation, to such as have known the doctrine, and purpose, and faith, and charity, and manner of life, of such a one, as the apostle speaks; so as to be told of nothing, but what you knew before: and so they are not dubious and uncertain thoughts, that you are to employ upon such a theme; you are well assured of the truth of the fact, and when you know it to be true, you cannot but discern it to be very considerable and important truth, and of very great concernment to you. What the spirit of such a one has been through his whole course, you have a very high example of in this blessed apostle; and a copy has been written out fair, after such a pattern, by this lately deceased worthy servant of Christ. Besides the many straits and difficulties, that great apostle met with in the course and current of his time; he meets with this towards the end of it, to be in a strait between two, and he does not know what to choose, namely, between these two things, the consideration of what would be the best and most valuable good to himself; and the consideration of what would be the more valuable good unto the Christian church; and particularly unto these Christian Philippians, to whom he now writes. He had no doubt at all in the case, but that to depart, and to be with Christ, would be the best and most valuable good to himself: and it was as little to be doubted of, but that his continued abode and stay in this world, would be much more a valuable good unto the Christian church; and unto this or that church in particular, that had enjoyed, and might further enjoy, his most fruitful labours. His difficulty and strait was not either what was best for him, or what was best for them; but which of these two he should, upon the whole, prefer; whether he should prefer his own private interest, or prefer the common interest of Christ in the world. And upon weighing and pondering the matter with himself, he does prefer the latter, so as, without any kind of hesitation, to express a great complacency in it, that he should

be continued yet longer, some time longer, for common good, in this world. And it was a most noble piece of self-denial that was exercised herein, if you consider what the apostle's privileges had been. He had been caught up into the third heaven, he had there seen unutterable things; nor could he doubt his interest in the felicity and glory of the heavenly state. On the other hand consider, his life here on earth was no voluptuous life, it was not a life of ease and pleasure. See the account that he gives of it in 1 Cor. 4. and 2 Cor. 6. and in chap. 11. of the same epistle. And to find, amongst how many deaths he conversed as it were every day of his life, how familiar labours, and fastings, and watchings were to him; yea stripes and imprisonments; and that he was now at this time a prisoner, as we see in some foregoing verses of this very chapter, namely, ver. 13, 14, 16. even in the very lion's paw, in the continual expectation of being devoured, and not long after to be offered up, as he elsewhere speaks. Yet he seems to take great complacency in the thoughts of having some addition made to his time in this world, on the common Christian account: and that his own blessedness and glory should be, for this reason, a little while deferred; he was patient of this, he could endure it, out of his love to Christ and the souls of men. But as to himself, for what he esteemed, and desired accordingly, as his best and most valuable good, he was in no hesitation or doubt concerning that, but pronounces without any more ado, that he did desire to be dissolved, or depart (the words may be read either way) and to be with Christ, which is far better; only he distinguishes what was his own most valuable good, and what was the most valuable good of the Christian church. And though he give this latter the preference, as in itself the more considerable thing: yet as to himself, and his own concerns, to depart, and be with Christ, he reckons far better: and accordingly he did desire it as such, as better for him; as having nothing to detain him, or nothing, which, on his own private account, he could so much mind or covet, as that.

Now in this comparison, it is this one side of it, which the words that I have read to you do call us to consider, and confine us to at this time. As to that other part, it lies within the compass of the context, but not of the text; and so we shall not treat of that at present: but consider, what is the genuine temper and disposition of a christian, and more particularly of a minister of Christ, in reference to what he is to eye and look upon as his own best, and most valuable good; and that is, to depart, and to be with Christ. This indeed the apostle speaks of himself, a great and eminent minister of the gospel of Christ. But though this temper and disposition of spirit was agreeable,

it was not appropriate to such a one. It is indeed very agreeable, it is very suitable to the spirit of a faithful minister of Christ, in reference to himself, and any interest and concern of his, to desire to depart, and to be with Christ: but it is not so agreeable to such a one, as to be appropriate to him, or to exclude the generality of serious and living christians; because it is upon one account; principally common to ministers, and to other christians, that this judgment is to be made, and this desire is to have place in reference to that judgment. And therefore, that is what I will, for the little time that remains, chiefly insist upon:—That it ought to be, and in very great measure is, the temper and character of gracious persons, or sincere christians, but principally of the faithful ministers of Christ, with reference to any interest or concern of theirs, to desire to leave this world, and to be with Christ.—And in speaking to this, I shall briefly, —explain what requires to be explained in it;—shew you upon what grounds this temper and disposition of mind is agreeable, in the general to sincere christians: and upon what more peculiar grounds it is more especially suitable to the faithful ministers of Christ: and—so make use of the whole.

I. As to what requires explication. Here we must show you—what the object of this desire is, and then—show you what this desire, with the judgment unto which it is conformable, imports and carries in it. Then we shall proceed to consider, the grounds, both with reference to christians in general, and the faithful ministers of Christ in special, of their having this as an habitual temper of spirit belonging to them.

1. We are to consider the object, which this disposition of spirit, here described, has reference to. And that is twofold, privative, and positive. There is,

(1.) The privative object, that this disposition has reference to; and that is, departing from hence. Their desire is to be gone, not to stay always here, that is, as to any concern of their own. Indeed upon other accounts, abstracted from their own and more important, there may be considerations that may induce their willingness to stay; but as to their own concerns, the privative object of their desire, is, to be dissolved, or to be gone, εις το αναλυσαι, they would fain be dissolved; take that reading, and this is such a one's sense, I would fain have my bonds and shackles taken off, I would be loose, not be always confined to a body of sin and death, and to a vain and wicked world: for these are the things to which we are united: or take the other reading, that are to be left, in this departure. To depart, what are we to depart from? Why, the *gravamina;* the most grievous things are, a body of sin and death, and a

vain and sinful world. When God sees good, I would depart, says such a one, from these irksome grievous things, that, while they detain me, torment me every hour. And then,

(2.) There is the positive object, that this disposition has reference to; and that is, to be with Christ. This is a mighty thought, if we had time to stay upon it. It is generally to be considered here, with reference to what state of our Lord Christ, this was spoken, and then what it is to be with him in that state.

[1.] With reference to what state of our Lord Jesus this was spoken, I desire to be with Christ. Christ was not at this time in his state of humiliation; he was not now in the form of a servant; he was not now going to die, and sacrifice himself upon an ignominious cross, as it was mentioned he had done, in the next chapter, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was obedient to death. It is not in reference to this state, but what follows, that this is spoken; wherefore God has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name; that at his name, or in his name, every knee shall bow, both of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth. It is that state of glory, in which he was enthroned, and was receiving the homage of all ranks of creatures, according to their capacities. It is this state, that is here referred to. And then,

[2.] What is it to be with him in this state, that we are to consider: and plain it is, it is not to be with him as spectators only, but in some sort as partakers; not barely as spectators. Indeed, to be so, is a most desirable thing, to all the lovers of Christ; to behold him upon the throne, invested with glory, the highest glory. But this is not all. Indeed, participation with him is sometimes expressed by beholding, as in John 17. 24. Father, I will, that they whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory that thou hast given me: For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world was laid. But that beholding, is fruitive vision; the vision, not of mere spectation, but fruition, by which we enjoy what we see. And so we are taught to reckon concerning this being with Christ in the state of glory. If we be dead with him, we believe we shall also live with him, by participation of the same glorious, blissful life, Rom. 6. 8. and chap. 8. ver. 17. If we are children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; that if we suffer with him, we might be also glorified together. Glorified, is to be made glorious, to be participants of the same glory with him, and not spectators merely. We are not to be glorified merely by a glory that we

are to behold, but which we are to bear; not which we are to be the witnesses of only, but the subjects, whereby we are to be made glorious, in conformity to him, and in communion with him. And here that we may more fully conceive the sense of this being with Christ, in the state of perfect felicity and glory, it is requisite we consider these two things,—the highest perfection of the object; and,—a suitable perfection of the subject, according to its capacity, by which it can converse with, and enjoy, what continually rays, and is communicated from so glorious and blessed an object.

First. The object in his highest perfection; when our Lord Jesus Christ, not considered merely as God, but as God-man, is exalted, and made as glorious as glory could any way make him, when he is exalted, by way of remuneration for what he had done, for what he had suffered, for what he had achieved and accomplished by his doing and suffering, and he is now in all that most perfect dignity and glory that belongs to him on that account; this consideration we are to have of the glorious object. We are to consider the high and most absolute perfection of that Person, the most wonderful one that ever was, and of which neither created nature, nor uncreated, affords the like; that is, such a person, in which all the excellencies of created and uncreated nature did meet, or were united; and all that felicity, and glory, and blessedness, that this person, according to either nature, and both together, doth enjoy. Here is the object wherewith we are to communicate.

Secondly, And then to be with him, as participants, implies the connoted and consequential perfection of the subject in itself, the highest that it is capable of, the perfection of all the powers and faculties belonging to a creature of such a nature. A mind apt to employ itself about things of highest value and excellency, able to comprehend whatsoever is needful, and fit to be known of such things; contented not to know what is unfit. A will refined from all terrene tinctures and propensions, enlarged and attempered to the best and highest good. Whence must proceed the liveliest and purest desires, the noblest and most grateful perceptions, and delights, the pleasantest and most satisfying relishes and fruitions.

For (the high perfection of the object being supposed) the subject is the spirit of a just man made perfect, (Heb. 12. 24.) of one arrived, out of an imperfect to a perfect state. No supposable allusion in this text needs to exclude the real subjective perfection, which is so proper to such spirits and to such a state as is then finally referred to. The satisfaction itself, which results, cannot but be proportionable; according to the perfect excellency of the object, and the perfected capacity of the subject, a most

entire satisfaction. These two, meeting together, the most glorious object, and a glorified spirit made capable of conversing with it, and enjoying it to the full. This makes that fulness of joy, those pleasures for evermore, that are at God's right hand or in his power, to dispose of, in eternal communication, Psal. 16. Thus you have some account of the object, privative, and positive, what is to be left, and whom we are to come to; a sinful, mortal body to be left with a vain and wicked world; and a glorious Lord to be approached, so as to be with him, in actual, and complacential, and eternal communion; to be with him, not as spectators only, but partakers of that glory wherein he is. Then,

II. We are to consider the temper and disposition itself, of serious christians, and of the faithful ministers of Christ especially, in reference to this state of the objects. And it is made up of two things,—desire; and—estimation, or judgment; that is the measure of the former, and according whereto that desire is directed.

1. This desire is επιθυμια, intense desire, earnest desire, the fervour of desire. That is, as to myself, and as to any concern of mine, I do most earnestly desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ: επιθυμια signifies not less than that. And then,

2. The judgment that is made of the case, unto which this desire is conformable. That is, that to be with Christ is far better, far better! It is a strange emphasis, that is used in the Greek text, to express this: for there are two comparatives, μαλλον κρεισσον; more better, with a mighty surplusage besides in the word conjoined, πολλω. I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ: which is better, better by much; or incomparably better; better above and beyond all comparison. One comparative would not serve the turn, but he adds another, and then superadds a vast surplusage over and above. This is the judgment of the case, according to which this desire is directed and measured. And now for the reasons of this temper and posture of soul, in reference to this state of the case. There are divers very obvious.

(1.) That this is most agreeable to the law of our creation, to desire and covet the most perfect state, whereof we are capable. It is an unnatural thing, not to do so, not to covet the perfection of that state, that we can finally attain to. Nature, in all creatures, tends to perfection; it is a monstrous disorder in nature, for any creature, if it be capable of choice, to choose a state beneath the highest perfection whereof it is capable. And,

(2.) It is most suitable to the design of our redemption, whether we consider the privative object, unto which our re-

demption refers, or the positive. The privative object, this world, that we are to forsake and leave, with this flesh, that con-naturalizes us to this world. Christ gave himself for us, to deliver us from this present evil world, Gal, 1. 4. As for his redeemed ones, those for whom he gave himself, he is willing they should be here awhile; but he gave himself for them, that they might not be here always: that he might fetch them out of this horrid abyss of darkness, impurity, and death.

And if you look to the positive object, our Lord died to bring us to God, 1 Pet. 3. 18. He suffered once, the just for the unjust, for this purpose. He will never desist, till he have brought us quite home to God. And it became him, by whom are all things; and for whom are all things in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect by sufferings, Heb. 2. 10. He suffered, and those sufferings he underwent, were the price of our redemption; and for this, to bring the many sons to glory, that were to be brought. And it becomes him, that made all things by himself, and for himself, to bring about his great and glorious design this way; to make the Captain of our salvation perfect, that is, perfectly master of his design. And Rev. 5. 9. we are told, that the lamb, that was slain, was slain on purpose, that he might redeem us to God by his blood; that he might be capable of saying at last, I have shed my blood, and it has not been in vain; here I have brought back thy wandering strays to thee, that were separate, that had gone off. He has redeemed them to God by his blood, they were gone off from God; and he, in this way, fetches them back to God; never reckoning his work finished, till he can say, here am, I and the children thou hast given me.

(3.) This most fully answers the gospel call, under which we continually are, as to both the parts of the object, the privative and positive. By the gospel we are called out of the world. This is carried in the very notion of the church, it consists of a people, called out of the world. And that call is not finished till we are quite out; but we must be out in the inclination of our minds; to be gone from this world, that we may be with the Lord. And as to the positive part of the gospel-call, the final term of it is the eternal glory. The God of all grace has called us to his own eternal glory by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 5. 10.

(4.) This is most suitable unto the aim and tendency of the new creature, which is indeed the effect of the gospel-call; wheresoever it comes to be effectual calling, the new creature is the product. This is the genius of the new creature, to aspire upwards. They that have received the first-fruits of the spirit groan within themselves; groan as under a pressure, or burden; to be loosened from this world, from this earth, and from these bodies; and to partake in the glory of the sons of God, mani-

fested in the proper season of their manifestation, Rom. 8. 19. compared with the 23d. And as they, that in the work of the new creation, are what they are, new creatures in being born from heaven; so they are born for it. Except a man be born, ανοθεν, from above, he cannot enter into nor see the kingdom of God, John 3. 3, 5. He is born for this heavenly state, when he is regenerate, when he is made a new creature, that he may be capable of entering into this kingdom. And 1 Pet. 1. 3. Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. There are principles inlaid in the work of the new creature, which dispose the soul God-ward, and heaven-ward. Hereby they are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, as in that Coloss. 1. 12. And to suppose that there should be a new creature without such a disposition as this, is to suppose the new creature to be the most unnatural creature under heaven. It must have dispositions in it suitable to its nature, and to that state that it is designed ultimately for; as every other creature is suited to the place and state it is to hold in the creation of God.

But then as to what is more peculiar to ministers, they have more reason than others for this temper and disposition of spirit, both as they know more, generally, of the difficulties of the world, and should be supposed to know more of the state of the other world than the generality of other men do. Their toil, and labour, and travel, while they are here in this world, is like to be more: read at leisure 1 Cor. 4. 9,—13. with 2 Cor. 6. 4, 5. They have many more uncomfortable things to exercise them; especially, the small success of their labours, that they often do but sow the wind, and sometimes reap the whirlwind, and may be glad to depart on this account. And it is to be supposed too, that they should know more of the other world: for they are more obliged to be daily conversant there; their constant business has a steady direct tendency thitherward: and therefore as this cannot but be the temper of serious christians, it is to much more so of the faithful ministers of Christ.

III. And therefore, to draw to a conclusion, and shut up all with some use, we may,

1. Infer from it, the greatness of that capacity which belongs to an intelligent immortal spirit, that it is capable of such a state, as being glorified with the Lord Jesus Christ in that high exaltation of his; it is a state, whereof the human spirit is capable. It is indeed very unapt, very indisposed, till the regenerating work take place; till the divine Spirit have moulded it to that state; but then, in the mean time, there is a capacity,

a ground-work, upon which the divine Spirit does operate, by enlightening the mind, and enlarging the will, and refining and defecating the affections, and implanting celestial principles, that do all dispose it heaven-ward. But in the mean time, it is a useful reflection for every intelligent spirit, that inhabits mortal flesh, to consider, what do I here? While it is my lot, to be yet inhabiting this flesh, am I only to mind the things of the flesh? I am capable of an abode above, with the blessed glorious Lord of all, with him my greater concernments do now lie: Col. 3. 1, 2. And,

2. It further lets us see the wonderful love of God in Christ, that he should design such mean abject creatures as we to such a state; that is, that when we depart, and leave this world, we are to be with Christ. O kind design! What admirable love is this, that he will not have his own to be always at a distance and far from him! When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory, in that of Col. 3. 4. And again further,

3. We may infer hence, that holiness, wherever it comes to have place, does comprehend and include in it divine wisdom, so as to make persons capable of judging right, or making a true estimate of things, which are more valuable, and which are less. Till the sanctifying work of God's spirit take place in the minds and hearts of men, they judge like fools; they say a portion here on earth is better, let us dwell always amidst the darkness and death of this lower world, and let them be with Christ that will. But says a gracious spirit, to be with Christ is far better, incomparably, beyond all comparison better, and therefore let us depart, and be with him, as to any interest and concern of ours. And this being so, it is of the greatest consequence to us imaginable, for all of us to endeavour to get this temper of spirit made habitual to ourselves: for it is a thing of dreadful importance, to find the temper of my mind and soul differ from that of all good christians that ever were, or ever shall be. It is one thing indeed, to be willing to have the height of our happiness deferred for common good; but it is quite another thing, to desire to stay here, because I love this world better, and when the practical judgment of our souls is, I had rather be here; when not any concern for the interest of Christ, or design of doing him service here, does reconcile me to an earthly state; but my own temper and spirit is such, that I cannot endure the thoughts of a remove. And let me insist here a little. When the best are continually going; and though the worst do not go the same way, they are going hence too, departing from hence; not to be willing to follow! To have a desire

running counter to the stream and course of nature, in all, and the current of grace in the best, is very unaccountable; and wherein we should by no means tolerate ourselves. An irrational desire of what we see to be impossible: a desire that fights against necessity, which will be too hard for us, and will overcome at last, as to the term from which, an abode here; and an unholy desire, in respect of the term to which, namely, not to be with Christ; such a desire we should no more endure in ourselves, than fire in our bosoms. To have such an excellent person gone from amongst us, as is lately gone; but to have no disposition to follow! You loved him well, and you loved to hear him preach of heaven, but you cannot endure the thoughts of going where he is gone! Is this well? The world is dying, and you would live! *miser est qui cunque non vult mundo secum moriente mori.* Sen. Trag. What a wretched miscreant is he, that would be an exception from all mankind! And cannot be content to die, when the whole world is dying with him! And for christians united with Christ, they are such in whose hearts there is a rooted propension towards him, so as to covet his presence above all things, Rev. 22. The Spirit and the bride say, come, come Lord Jesus; either come and take us to thee, or come and manifest thyself to us. Consider then, how absolutely necessary it is, if there be this terrene temper of spirit, to get it changed. For,

(1.) While it remains, it countermines the sum of religion. All Christianity runs counter, in the whole design of it, to this temper of spirit, for it terminates on the other world. But when all our thoughts and designs terminate on this world, what a dismal thing is it! to have a temper and disposition in me, wholly repugnant to the design of the Christian religion, which is but to draw people off from this world, and to fit them for another.

(2.) It will infer, in the next place, that whenever any die, they must die just after the same manner that wicked men do, a violent death; be torn away from their earthly station. He shall pluck him out of his dwelling-place, and root him out of the land of the living, as the psalmist speaks, Psal. 52. 5. This is dying a violent death; our hearts do not consent, we cannot go but as we are torn up by the roots, and plucked out of our dwelling-places. This is quite another thing from that, Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; and this desiring to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. And it signifies,

(3.) Our not yet having taken God for our God; for our taking him to be our God, and to be our best good, is the same thing. If God be not our best good, he is not our God: and can we choose to be willing to be at an eternal distance from

our best good? It must signify, that the love of God has no place in us, sincere love, true love to Christ, for it is never true, if it be not supreme. But it is the greatest absurdity imaginable, that I should supremely love one, that I desire never to be with, or enjoy. I shall only add, with reference to the sad occasion that lies in view before us, that what instances we meet with of this kind, should leave their several correspondent effects and impressions upon our spirits, partly of lamentation, and partly of imitation, and partly of peaceful submission and satisfaction in the issue, however grievous it be to us.

1. Of Lamentation. It is a much to be lamented thing, when such go, as that reverend and worthy person that is lately gone from amongst you. For this temper of spirit being supposed, by how much the more there was of the conjunct disposition to have been content to have staid longer for public good; this speaks so much the more of an excellent spirit: when desires are so fervent after the purity and perfection of the heavenly state, that nothing but sincere devotedness to the interest of God in Christ, could make them patient of longer abode on earth. It is a respect to God that either draws, or detains them, nothing but what is divine inclines them either way: either the enjoyment of God above or his further service here below. That is an excellent spirit that lies under such influences. And the higher was the excellency of such a man, the greater is the loss of him. The more he desired heaven, within such limits, the greater was his value, and with so much the brighter lustre he shone on earth. There is much of God conspicuous in such a man. And it was not a little of him that was observable in this worthy person. Such a course as his was, that even course, that peaceful course, wherein was so eminent devotedness to God, and benignity towards man, shewed his spirit was touched by the one, for the other. It could not be, but by influence from heaven, that he so steadily tended thitherward himself, and was only willing to stay so long out of it, that he might invite and draw on as many as he could with him thither. Hereby he appeared so much the more attempered to the heavenly state, and that world where divine love governs, making a man by how much the more strongly he was attracted himself by it, so much the more desirous to attract others. It is what such a one has about him of God on earth, that makes him a desirable thing to us here; it is not what men have of the earthly spirit, but what they have of the divine Spirit, that makes them useful, both by their labours and examples, to this world of ours; as was this eminent servant of Christ. It is a great thing, to have one pass so long continued course as his was, with so equal a tem-

per. It is like I may have known him longer than many of most of you that were not related.

About fifty years I remember his course, and our conversation was not casual or at a distance, as that of mere colleagues, chosen by others, but as friends inward, and chosen by ourselves, many a day we have prayed together; conferred and taken sweet counsel together; when he was at once an example, and ornament to his college, where he lived respected and beloved of all, but of them most, who most knew him; that constant serenity, and equality of mind, that seriousness, that humility, wherein he excelled, rendered him amiable to observers; and therewith that industry and diligence that he used in his younger days, by which he laid up that great stock of learning and useful knowledge, that made him (when providence called him to the city) a well-instructed scribe, capable and apt to bring out of his treasury things new and old, whereof there is, and will be a long extant proof in his judicious and dilucid expositions of the epistles to the Philippians and the Colossians, which was the part he bore in the supplement to that most useful work, the English annotations on the Bible, by the reverend Mr. Matthew Pool. In the great city he shone a bright and burning light, till many such lights were in one day put under a bushel, I need not tell you what, or how black, that day was. And then, though he was constrained to desert his station, he did not desert his Master's work; but still he was with God, and God was with him; and you know it, I doubt not, many of you, what it was to live under so truly evangelical a minister; to have doctrine from time to time distilling as the dew, and dropping upon you, such, as from which you might perceive how great was his acquaintance with the mysteries of Christ: in reference to those, over whom he had opportunity to watch, it was undoubtedly, if it were not their great fault, their very great advantage.

As to his domestic relations, knowing so much of him, I cannot but so much the more lament their loss; God will I doubt not, be the bereaved widow's portion; but it ought, with tenderness to be considered, what it was for one person to lose successively two such helps, as this and her former husband were (who was also in another university my former and most inward friend, that worthy man Mr. Thomas Wadsworth) both eminent instruments in the church of Christ. And this has been more eminently remarkable concerning him that is lately gone, that the relations of the family, to whom he was not naturally related, the branches from another root, yet had that apprehension of his love and care of them, and of their own loss, as to desire this public testimony might from them remain

of him, that he was to them as tender a father, as if he had been a natural one; such fathers-in-law are seldom known, and therefore it ought to be mentioned, as that which may signify somewhat towards the embalming of his memory among you. Graces, when diffused, give their pleasant relishes to all that any way partake of them.

What follows was delivered in writing into my hands to be inserted, by a dear relation of his.—His humility and self-denial were eminently conspicuous in his taking upon him the care and charge of so small and poor a people, and continuing with them to the damage of his own estate, though he had considerable offers elsewhere. His meekness, as it was very visible in all his conversation, it was singularly shewed in his bearing and passing by slights and affronts, even from those he had very much obliged, taking off the resentments, that his friends had of the injuries of that kind put upon him, by abasing himself, saying, I am an unworthy creature, I deserve no better. His candour every one was certainly made sensible of, who should offer to speak any thing reflecting about any person behind their backs, for he was sure to vindicate or lenify in this case, as far as he could.

When labours, weakness, and age had worked out his strength of body, there was never any thing appeared so manifestly to trouble him, as being necessitated to desist from constant preaching.—And notwithstanding all temporal discouragements he met with in the course of his ministry, his mind to the very last, was to have both his sons brought up to it. During the short time of his last illness, when his head appeared somewhat disordered in other things, by the pains that were upon him, it was observable, that he always shewed himself sensible in hearing or discoursing about any thing religious; being among other things discoursed with by his brother about the discharge of his ministry, he answered, he hoped, he had endeavoured to serve God faithfully, and sincerely, though he had been an unprofitable servant. About five hours before his death, he said, God is my portion, and desired those about him to join with him in prayer, wherein he expressed himself very suitably to his case as a dying man, concluding thus: "Grant that when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, I may be taken to those mansions not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

As his life was calm and serene, so was his dying, for though throughout his sickness, he was all along apprehensive of approaching death: there was no ruffle upon his spirit, of which he himself then gave this account, "I know in whom I have believed."

2. Of Imitation. And as such strokes, when they come ought to be lamented, they that by such strokes are taken away, ought to be imitated. The example remains; you have the idea left; you know how such a one lived, how he walked, how he conversed with his family, how he conversed with you as he had occasion: that excellent spirit he discovered in all, how much of an imitable example has it given to all those that are capable of imitating and receiving instruction that way?

3. Of Satisfaction. But it ought also to have the effect of satisfaction in the divine pleasure. When such a blow as this comes, do not repine, peacefully submit, though it carry smartness and severity with it. You ought to feel it, but yet notwithstanding to receive it with submissive silence, to be dumb, and not open your mouths, remembering who hath done it, and that it is at the disposal of wisdom that cannot err, as well as of power that cannot be resisted, and of kindness and goodness that has its gratefulness to this departed servant of his. For consider, that notwithstanding his willingness to have staid longer, if his Lord, whose he was, and whom he served, had thought fit: yet this could not but be his habitual sense, to desire to depart, and to be with him, which was far better. And if Christ be pleased, and he be pleased, why should we be displeased?

This was the will of Christ, declared by his word, as to the thing, John 17. 24. Father, I will, that those that thou hast given me, be with me where I am, to behold my glory. And declared by the event as to the time. And his will, both because it was Christ's, and because it was best. Who are we that we should oppose our will to so kind a will on Christ's part, and so well-pleased a will on his part? or that a dissatisfaction should remain with us, as to what there is with Christ, and him, so entire satisfaction!

A FUNERAL

SERMON,

FOR

THAT EXCELLENT MINISTER OF CHRIST,

THE TRULY

REV. WILLIAM BATES, D. D.

Who deceased July 14, 1699.

TO THE RIGHT NOBLE

WILLIAM,

Duke and Earl of Bedford; Marquis of Tavistock, Lord Russel, Baron Russel of Thornhaugh, Lord Lieutenant of the Counties of Middlesex, Bedford and Cambridge: Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, and one of His Majesty's most honourable Privy Council.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

THE peculiar and just respect which your Grace hath long had for the worthy person, whose much lamented decease occasioned the following discourse, easily induced me to believe, it would not offend your Grace, that your illustrious name is prefixed to it. As it also was the sense of his mournful relict, that it could be no less than your Grace's right, such a memorial should be extant, of the favourable aspects wherewith you have been pleased to honour this her so dear relative. Nor can it be unsuitable to the noble amplitude of your truly great mind, that it should be told the world you knew how to value true worth, wheresoever you found it. Not confining your respects to any party; or distinguishing men by any, when especially the parties themselves are distinguished by marks, which they who wear them, count indifferent, and which, therefore, must be understood to make men neither better nor worse. And if they who wear them not, count otherwise, though they should be mistaken in their judgment, after their having endeavoured to the uttermost, to be rightly informed; their sincerity, accompanied, and evidenced, by great self-denial, must in the account of so equal, and candid a judge, as your Grace, far outweigh so light a mistake, in so small matters. Such differences will be easily tolerable, where there is that mutual charity, as neither to think a different judgment to be bribed with dignities, and emoluments, on the one hand; nor to be perverted by humour, and affectation of singularity, on the other.

The reverend doctor's great candour, and moderation, in reference to the things wherein he hath been constrained to differ from many excellent persons; and his remoteness from any disposition, to censure them from whom he differed, have been these many years conspicuous to all that knew him. The apprehension having been deeply inwrought into the temper of his mind, that the things wherein only it could be possible for truly good men to differ, must be but trifles, in comparison of the much greater things, wherein it was impossible for them not to agree. And I no way doubt, but the things for which your grace most deservedly valued this excellent person, were such as have in them an inherent, and immutable goodness; not varying with times, or the changeable posture of secular affairs; but which must be the same in all times. Nor appropriate to persons of this or that denomination, but that may be common to persons sincerely good, of any denomination whatsoever. Whereupon the testimony your Grace hath from time to time, given of your value of him, on such an account, must have redounded to yourself; have reflected true honour on your own name; shewn your discerning judgment of persons and things; and entitled you to his prayers; which, I hope, have been available to the drawing down of blessings on yourself and your noble family.

Unto whose must his prayers also be added, for the same purposes; who is with greatest sincerity, and under many obligations,

Your Grace's most obedient,

and most humble servant,

JOHN HOWE.

A

FUNERAL SERMON.

IT is grievous to me to tell you, in whose room and stead I do now stand in this place this day. Nor do I need; you can tell yourselves, observing the stated courses and alterations held in this lecture, that if the counsels of heaven had agreed with our desires and hopes on earth; this is the day, this is the hour, wherein you had again seen the face, and heard the voice of that excellent servant of Christ, whom we now lament as lost to us, and dead out of our world. Not absolutely dead: for God who is his God for ever and ever, is not the God of the dead but of the living. Dying out of this world, he was born into the other. But in that sense wherein he is dead to us, and this world of ours, what remains but that we agree to say, Let us die with him? And these are the words, which if God will graciously afford us his help and presence, we may fruitfully entertain ourselves with, upon this sad occasion at this time: you will find them in—

John xi. 16.

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

THE history to which these words belong, contains so illustrious, and instructive an instance of the Redeemer's power over both worlds and so plainly shews, that he could, at his pleasure, translate men out of the one into the other, as might best serve the proper purposes of his redemption, that it can never be unseasonable to us to consider it, who are always subject to the same power. And it is very especially seasonable at this time, when we have reason enough to re-consider his

late use of this power, in another kind less grateful to us, but not less wise, or just in itself; not the recalling of one out of the other world into this, but the calling away of one out of this world into the other; the translating of this excellent person from among us, whose longer abode here had been highly desirable, as his removal is most bitterly grievous, and must have been intolerable, were it not that though this is not the same act, it is an act of that same power over lives, which in all its exertions we are always to behold with the same profound, adoring silence, and a disposition of mind, to receive instruction from it, whether it be pleasing to us, or displeasing. I will make no apology for my recalling your thoughts, so long after, to this sad theme. Our mutual endearedness, his condescending affection to me, and my reverential affection to him, were so generally known to those that knew either of us, that it might be expected I should take some public notice of this severing stroke; and I may suppose my circumstances to be so known, that it is obvious to every one to understand I could do it no sooner.

It will not be unuseful to make some brief reflection upon this miraculous work of our Lord, and thence return to the special subject, which I desire your thoughts may be fixed upon, as mine have been. It was the most memorable of all our Lord's works of this kind, yet not mentioned by the other evangelists; lest, as is supposed, it should revive the Jewish malice against Lazarus; who, as Epiphanius tells us, was reported to have lived thirty years after, within which time the others had all written, whereas this evangelist wrote not, till after his final decease. It was wrought for the same great end, for which all his wonderful works were done and written, generally, for the glory of God, as is intimated, ver. 4. and particularly, as this evangelist tells us, ch. 20. 20, 21. That we might believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name. And though they all had this design: this towards the end of his course, seems meant for the last, and conclusive stroke, having a brighter and more conspicious appearance of the divine glory in it, for a fuller and more convictive demonstration, that he was the Son of God, and the Messiah, as he gave himself out to be. And all things were designed in the aptest subserviency hereto; that once for all, this long disputed point might be put out of all doubt.

For this end it is ordered, that Lazarus should at this time fall sick. Nothing more appeared to human prospect, but that the disease befel him according to the common course of natural causes: but says our Lord, this sickness is not unto death;

namely, as the final and permanent event or design of it; but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby, ver. 4. God's counsels lie deep, not obvious to common view. When such a servant of God is fallen sick, we know not what he intends to bring out of it. His glory may in his own way, and time, so much the more brightly shine forth, though we yet distinctly know not when or how. Upon this account, when our Lord not only heard of Lazarus's sickness, but knew he was dead, he yet defers two days, even though he knew him to have been at least two days dead before: so that when he now comes to the place, he finds him to have lain four days in the grave; ver. 17. He resolves to give so much the greater scope, and advantage, to the glory of the divine power, to display and evidence itself. He defers, till now death and the grave were in full dominion, that his conquest might be the more glorious. He had before raised some from death, none from the grave. The lamenting relatives were now in despair: the thoughts of restitution were quite laid aside. All their hopes were buried with the deceased in the same grave, as may be collected from sundry following verses.

In the like despair, not long after, were the mournful disciples, concerning their not only deceased, but entombed Lord, unto whose surprising resurrection, this seems a designed prelude. The bereaved relations, and their comforters, were all abandoned to sorrow, and drenched in tears. And with the rest we are told, ver. 35. that Jesus wept. But why was this? Was it that he knew not his own mind, or distrusted his own power? He had given sufficient intimation of his own purpose, and of the foresight he had of the certain, glorious issue of this gloomy dark providence. It is evident therefore for what he wept not. It is not so obvious to conclude for what he wept. It is most unworthy of him to suppose his was feigned sorrow, or that he shed hypocritical tears. Nor was this the only instance of his weeping: no, no, he was a man of sorrow, acquainted with griefs; and had always in view sufficient cause of real soul-trouble, as this is called, ver. 33. He groaned in spirit and was troubled. It must be, by the contexture of the evangelical history, near the time of his weeping over Jerusalem, when his soul was filled and taken up with sad and mournful themes.

But who can tell what thoughts lay deep in that large and comprehensive mind? We are sure, though he wept with the rest, that it was not as they wept, nor from the same motives. His thoughts were not as their thoughts, but as far wider, and higher, as the heavens are than the earth. We have no way to know what his thoughts were, we know what they might be.

He saw not Jerusalem only, but all this world buried in sin and death. He could not, as the second Adam, be the resurrection and the life, as he speaks, ver. 25. without beholding with a compassionate heart, the impurities and miseries, wherewith it was deluged by the first. And he had now enough in view to discompose his pure mind, intent upon high and great things; that when his business into this world was to prepare men for another; and, when they were fit, to translate them thither: even they that professed to believe on him, should no more understand him; that his kind and great design should be no more grateful to them, and so slowly enter into their minds and hearts, that when they saw one such translation, it should so much displease them, and they so little relish it, as to be all in tears and lamentations thereupon; and thereby discover such affixedness of heart and spirit to this present world, and state of things, as to prefer the enjoyment of a friend on earth, before all the glories of the heavenly state; so might their immoderate weeping some way cause his tears. But when he expressed his trouble by groans and tears, he suppressed the causes of it, and goes on to his present intended work. In order hereto, ver. 39, he commands the grave-stone to be removed; neglecting the objection, (ver. 39.) "By this time he stinks."

He observed with a compassionate indulgence, the diffidence which he meant speedily to refute. Nor, because we also are too prone to describe our limits to the divine power, ought we for his indulgence to be the less severe to ourselves. Forgetting the transcendency of that power, we think this or that strange, and scarce possible to be done, because we too lightly consider the equal or greater strangeness of what we see is done. We count things easy, that are by use become familiar to our senses, and apprehend we have the notion of them clear, and how they can come to be as they are; not having examined or inquired whether our apprehensions were right and congruous, or not. Things that have not struck our sense, making ourselves and even our sense the measure, we count impossible, and unconceivable.

By the course of nature our sense hath told us, a body so long in the grave must be putrid and stink. But who settled that course of nature? If we ascend not to the original cause, the fixation of that course it as admirable and unaccountable; if we do, a departure from it is as easy. What can the wisest philosophers conceive of the difference between an offensive smell and a grateful, but the different disposition, or texture of the particles of matter, in relation to the *sensorium*, or the receptive organ? When what the different disposition is, remains altogether, unapprehensible, and what no

man can tell. We go away well satisfied concerning what we see happens every day, because we never enquire how things came to be as they are; when what we have not known to come to pass, though not more difficult, we say can never be. Otherwise we should think it no more admirable, or difficult, to reduce in a moment the parts of matter to such a *situs*, as that they should give no offence to the sense of smelling, though before they did, than it was to the same power so to dispose, that in one sort of location, they should give that offence, in another they should not, and, perhaps, in a third, highly gratify and please. Thousands of like instances might be given, but this comes now in our way,

The world is full of miracles; we are compassed about with such, and are such. There is, it is true a peculiar notion of them, as necessary as they are themselves; signifying not what is done by a greater power, but less usual. As such, the use and need of them only argues the infirmity of our minds, sunk into earth and sense, and grown somnolent; whence they need to be roused by surprising and uncommon things, and brought to consider, that he only, who could fix and settle the so steady course of nature, could alter it, and make it forsake its wonted tract: which he must always be supposed to do, for some very weighty, important end and reason. So absolute power being ever in strict connexion with the most perfect wisdom, and therefore claiming to be the more earnestly attended to, and considered the more deeply. To that power that could create a man, it was equally easy to perfume a grave, or to make a new man spring up out of it, in fresh strength, comliness and vigour. To recompose the disordered parts of a body turning to dust, and refit it for the union and use of the returning soul; this he will not do often, but he saw a just and valuable reason for his doing it at this time.

He was now to give and leave behind him a full conclusive demonstration, once for all, of his being the Son of God, by whom the worlds were made: and the Christ, or Messiah (the great controverted point of that time) which v. 5, is called glorifying the Son; who for asserting this, was calumniated as an impostor and deceiver of the people. He was to give a specimen of his power, as such, over universal nature, and that he could at pleasure controul and countermand the most established laws of it. All things being put under that notion, as he was the Christ, into his hands, and all power given him both in heaven and earth, so as that by him all things must consist.* A power he was to use, being gradually, and at last perfectly,

* John 13. 3. Matt. 28. 18. Col. 1. 17.

to make all things new.† He was to make good his own title I am the resurrection and the life,‡ which he assumes in this context, to let it be seen he was no vain pretender; and that it was no vain faith that should be placed upon him in this respect, but that what he should now do, as to one, he was equally able to do, in the fit season for every one, when all that are in their graves, should hear his voice.§ He was to shew forth a resemblance of that more peculiar act of his most graciously undertaken office, to be a spring of life to souls morally dead, namely in trespasses and sins.‖ To give this divine and most noble kind of life! To do that most merciful and most Godlike work! He was to take away all cause or pretence for despair but that, whereas a death was to pass upon himself, and upon his church on earth, both he himself, and it, with his dead body should arise.** Therefore he utters that mighty commanding voice, at which rocks and mountains tremble and shiver, and which all the powers of nature must obey; "Lazarus come forth!" and he comes forth. These things we now lightly touched, hoping they may be of further use to us afterwards.§§ We expect not the like thing in our present mournful case; but we expect greater things; for which we are to await our Lord's season.

In the mean time let us return and consider what is overtured in the case the text refers to, when, as to any such remedy, the mourning friends expected as little as we. Here was a worthy good man gone; a friend of Christ, and of his friends. Christianity gives no man a terrestrial immortality; christians, even the best of them, must die as well as other men. This was a matter taken to heart by Christ himself, as we have seen, in a way becoming and worthy of him. His disciples also are deeply concerned, and they consider and discourse it their way. One of them, Thomas, who also was called Didymus (wherein is no other mystery, than that his name is first given us in He-

† Rev. 21. 5. ‡ ver. 25. § chap. 5. 28. ‖ Eph. ii.

** Isa. 26. 19.

§§ Where Lazarus's soul had been in the mean time, was too light a matter to weigh against these mighty things our Lord was intent upon. His concerns were to yield and bow to his Lord and Master's great designs: he could not be unfitter for his own business afterwards, than the apostle in the like case (for ought that he himself knew) was for his. The consideration of this matter did not divert our Lord Christ from what he was intent upon; nor let it divert us, but as a lighter matter, be left for the exercise of lighter minds.

brew, then in Greek, as is not unexampled elsewhere) proposes, as you have heard; "Let us also go that we may die with him." Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. There was, no doubt, an abounding fulness of sense in this good man's soul, from whence these words did proceed. And it might be twofold; either—Good and commendable, fit for our imitation, and whereto the temper of our spirits should be, conformed. Or,—Faulty and reprehensible; such, as against which, we should arm and fortify ourselves.—Such mixtures are not to be thought strange. It is little to be expected, that in what is hastily said by the best on earth, on an occasion apt to stir passions, there should be nothing but pure breathings of heavenly wisdom and goodness.

I. Under the former head, we shall speak of divers things, which we cannot, indeed, be sure were the explicit, distinct sense of this good man, at this time; but which might be, and should be ours on a like occasion. Which well agree with Christian principles, and which his words serve aptly enough to express; as

1. A firm belief of a future state. Did this good man only desire to partake with the other in death, and no more? Did his wish terminate here? Can we apprehend any thing good or desirable in mere death, that one would covet to share in with another? Or which one would be loath he should engross alone? Nor could Thomas mean this, having heard that Lazarus was already dead. It cannot be thought, that one who had been some years in immediate attendance upon the Son of God the Lord from heaven, and under his instructions, and who had so much opportunity to observe, that his whole design lay for another world: and that he never encouraged his followers to expect from him any advantages above others, in this world, but forewarned them of troubles and sufferings, to which they would be always liable from it, and that they must be content to wait for their rewards in another state: it is not to be thought that such a one was an infidel in reference to any such state; or that he thought his friend extinct by dying: or that when he wished to be with him, he wished to be nowhere, or nothing.

2. A mind loose and disengaged from this present world. He could be intent upon no great designs for this earth, who with the next that leaves it, was willing to go too.

3. Easy, placid thoughts of dying. He looked upon death as no such frightful thing, that could so familiarly, and off-hand, say, when he thought of such a one's dying; Come, let us go and die with him.

4. A distinguishing judgment concerning the states of men

hereafter, remote from thinking it fares with all alike, in the other world; but well informed, that it could only be ill with ill men: and well only with the good. A settled persuasion of a judgment to come. According to the declared rules of which judgment, this present judgment is formed, That they who continue in a course of well-doing, shall have eternal life; evil doers, indignation and wrath.*—This wish could not be thought less cautious than his, who says, with distinction, Let me die the death of the righteous.†—It must be far from him to be content, God should gather his soul with sinners.‡ The future state was, no doubt, considered as a state of separation between men and men. He could not covet to be associated with good and bad, promiscuously, and at random.

5. A rationally charitable opinion, and estimate, that he was sincerely good and happy; with whom he coveted to be united in death. Such an opinion is all that is here requisite. Faith it cannot be, for the object is not a revealed thing. Knowledge it is not, for we have no medium to know it by. That we have more reason to think this, than the contrary, of such a one is sufficient, and that this should be implied in this wish, is necessary. Here was an apprehension of a happy state, the other was passed into. That saying, *sit anima mea cum philosophis*, implied that he who said it, thought their state better than some other men's. And Thomas could not but have sufficient reason for his apprehension of Lazarus's sincerity, so as not to doubt of his felicity. His house he observed, was our Lord's resort: here he was received gladly by him and his good sisters. His doctrine, we have cause to think, he entertained as well as himself, and himself for his doctrine's sake. The peculiar affection our Lord had for him, observed by the domestics, that say, He whom thou lovest is sick, ver. 3. noted by the Jews, with a, Behold how he loved him, ver. 35. could leave Thomas no ground of doubt, but he was a sincere believer on the Son of God, and now in a blessed state: so are christians, visibly such, to esteem of one another, and accordingly to have communion with one another in grace; and hope and wish for it in glory. A temper, now, very alien from too many that go under that name; who make not the great substantials of Christianity the measure of their present and hoped communion, but devised additions of their own: or rather, not what they add to, but substitute in the stead of, faith, mercy, and the love of God; and license themselves to ascend the throne, usurp the seat of judgment, and boldly damn all them who are not of their own complexion and party; and that cannot so far con-

† Num. 23. 10. * Rom. 2. 7. 8. ‡ Psal. 26. 9.

form to their humours, passions, prejudices, and interested inclinations, as to say and act in every thing just as they do.

6. A most ardent, and most generous love to such good men upon that just and reasonable apprehension of them. For, what love can be greater? How can one more highly express love to any man, than by a declared willingness to live and die with him; and simply to die, when he can no longer live with him? Love raised to this pitch is stronger than death. Heathen story is not without such instances of some, whom no dread of death could sever from each other; but that they have been willing, as the case should require, to die with, or to die for, another. To be either each other's companions, or substitutes in death. The tyrant Dionysius having sentenced to death one of that admirable pair, Damon and Pythias, and fixed the day of execution, the condemned person petitioned for leave to be absent upon important occasions; in that interval his friend offering himself, as his sponsor, to die for him, if he returned not by the appointed day. He returning punctually with all diligence, knowing his friend's life to be otherwise in hazard: the tyrant, in great admiration of their mutual love and fidelity, pardons the condemned, and requests of them both, that they would admit him, as a third person, into the society of their friendship.*

What they tell us of divers others I mention not, whom no death could sever: whom dangers did more closely unite. Such as are conjoined in the same common cause, their mutual love mutually animates them even to face death; because each finds the other will not flinch, or leave him in danger alone. Many waxed bold by the apostle's bonds,† when they could not but be thought bonds of death: no doubt, because he was dear to them. So that they were willing even to run into the same bonds, because he was bound by them. Even in this sense love casts out fear. And what could more either express his own love, or tend to inflame other men's than when that great apostle bespeaks the christians of that time, as having his life bound up in theirs? I live if ye stand fast‡—that he was ready to impart with the gospel, even his own soul to them, because they were dear to him.‖ And that they were in his heart to live and die with them.§ There seemed to be but one life common to him and them, When there are such unions, that each is to the other an *alter ego, another self*; and another's soul is to a man

* Related by Cicero, de Offic. lib. 3. and divers others.

† Phil. 1 14. ‡ 1 Thes. 3. 8. ‖ Chap. 2. 8. § 2 Cor. 7. 3.

as half his own,* as he pathetically phrases it. Here is the height of affection! And that affection mutually heightens each other's courage, and is a continual and reciprocrated source of a generous magnanimity springing from the one into the other's breast: while they perceive in one another a mutual vying, who shall the more adventurously rush upon death for, or in conjunction with, the other.

This seems not alien from the temper of Thomas's mind in his uttering of these words. For when our Lord proposed going into Judea, other of the disciples objecting that the Jews had there lately sought to kill him; he, when he understood Lazarus was dead, whom he knew to be a friend to that cause, though he died not for it; Come, says he, let us now fear no death, let us rush, in *media arma*, throw ourselves into the midst of death, and there breathe forth our souls, full of love to God, and Christ, and him, and one another; even upon the same spot where this friend of our Lord, and our common cause and interest, breathed forth his. These noble principles, fortitude and love, might have made two distinct heads of discourse; but they are so complicated, and interwoven with one another, that they were scarce to be considered apart. And this complication these words more than intimate—That their hearts may be comforted (or inclined, and stirred up, as the word there used signifies) being knit together in love.†

7. A lively apprehension of the large, abounding diffusion of the divine fulness: sufficiently able to replenish and satisfy all that shall be prepared to partake in it. That this good man's eye was upon somewhat else than mere death, and that he coveted not to die for dying sake, must be out of doubt with us. He certainly aimed at a blessed state after death. And who can suppose his mind void of that common notion, that the blessedness of souls must lie in God? But this could not be all. The faint, spiritless notion, of a felicity to be enjoyed in God, could signify little to the present purpose. Here must be a lively, gustful apprehension of it too: for here is intervening death to be gone through. And he expresses himself willing to attempt this difficult pass. Let us go—that we may die—How few do you know, or converse with, that are without this notion, that God is the blessedness of souls? Or that assent not to it as soon as they hear it? Yet how few do you know, that are willing to die, to enjoy him? No, no, they are generally willing, rather to eat the dust of the earth, and feed upon ashes, thousands of years, than go to God for a better portion! Notwithstanding their dead, spiritless, inefficacious

* Hor. † Col. 2. 2.

notion of a divine heavenly felicity, they had rather want it. A blessedness not to be had on earth, or that must come by dying! They bless themselves from such a blessedness! It is plain then, there must be more than a dead notion to overcome their aversion to dying. And what can that be more? It is as plain, it must be a vivid apprehension of such a blessedness in God after death. And that imports two things.

(1.) A divine faith of it. It must be the apprehension of faith, and of a divine faith. Almost every one pretends to believe it; but it is generally with a human faith only: because their parents, or preachers, or the common voice of the country, hath told them so. A divine faith is full of divine life and vigour; the substance and evidence of what is believed. The soul being overpowered into this belief by the majesty, and authority of the great God revealing it, and the awfulness of his testimony; the word of God revealing this, as other portions of sacred truth, works effectually in them that so believe it: that is, that receive it not as the word of man, but as the word of God.* They that live in the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised,† would break through a thousand deaths to obtain it. This is more than a spiritless notion. And,

(2.) Such a lively apprehension hath in it somewhat of a present sense, and foretaste of that blessedness: a heaven begun, which is of the same kind with their future heaven. They have the kingdom of God in them, which stands in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.‡ Such an earnest speaks their own right, while they are yet sensible of the great imperfection of their present state. They are therefore willing to die, that they may be made perfect. They now know by taste what it is to enjoy God. O taste and see that God is good!§—A mere notion informs us not enough, so as to actuate our minds what that means. Notwithstanding it, the carnal mind can frame no distinct heart-moving thought of felicity; other, or more grateful, than the relishes of meat and drink, or the satisfaction of some or other mean or carnalized appetite. They that have tasted somewhat of a higher kind, long for more, and most of all, that most perfect fruition which they must pass through death to attain.

We will not suppose this good man to have been destitute of such a faith, and of such tastes, of the heavenly felicity. And as hereby he was not without a lively apprehension of the kind and nature of it, so we must suppose him to have a like apprehension of the large, copious, abounding, and diffusive

* 1 Thess. 2. 13. † Tit. 1. 2. ‡ Rom. 14. 17.
§ Psal. 34. 8.

fulness of it, whereof his words give some intimation: "Let us go and die with him." He doubted not of a sufficiently extensive communion in this blessedness. As if it had been said, There is enough for him and us all. And such an apprehension we all ought to have of the blessedness of the heavenly state, into which we are to be intromitted by death, that it is enough for all that can be in any possibility to partake in it. So that the abounding plenitude of no one's portion can be any diminution to another's. The kind and nature of material, sensible good, hath a remarkable, and most agreeable affinity to what is said, and what, upon very strict inquiry, one knows not how, not to say, of matter itself, that it is perpetually divisible; but so, as that every part and particle is still less and less. Whereupon it cannot but be, that whatsoever any enjoy of terrene good, so much is detracted from the rest. Of intellectual, spiritual good, knowledge, wisdom, grace, glory, the case is quite different. Let any possess never so much, it nothing diminishes another's possession in the same kind. If another man be never so wise, good, or happy, it takes nothing from me, I may be as wise, good, and happy. At least, that hinders not, but I may.

How pleasant a contemplation is this! that in the vast and numberless regions of light, bliss and glory, the blessed inhabitants are all drawing from the same fountain; solacing themselves in that fulness of joy, drinking in from those rivers of pleasure that flow from the divine presence for evermore! All deriving, unto satiety, from that fulness that filleth all in all.

8. Preference of the society with holy ones in the heavenly state, above any to be enjoyed on earth. The words, as to their most obvious sense, seem to be full of this: with whom I would live, with him I would die. Is not this our common sense? Not that we can apprehend any thing in the very act, or article of dying, that can make dying with one more desirable than with another; but it must be meant of what is to follow. We would not have death to part us. We would enjoy one another after death, but so as we did not before. It is very probable our Lord and his disciples had formerly enjoyed pleasant hours with Lazarus, in his own house. But why doth Thomas, therefore, desire they might die to be with him? Excepting him, he might still have enjoyed the same society on earth, and of many other christian friends besides. But we see his proposal concerned not himself only. It is, Let us go die with him. He reckoned they should all die, and be with him together. And that the state they should then be in, would have, in point of society and conversation, such ad-

vantages, above what their present state afforded, as were worth dying for.

And how can we but apprehend the vast difference? Whatever delight good men on earth have had in one another's society, they must then be better company than ever. How hard is it now to communicate our sentiments! We know not what our ways of converse shall hereafter be, but we know that such words as we now use are very slow, defective media of conveying our minds and sense to one another. What a difficulty do we now find if we apprehend a thing clearly ourselves, to make another master of our notion? What circumlocutions do we need! What explications, to make another understand our meaning! And then those explications need further explication, and so we run ourselves into new difficulties, and entangle one another more and more. Most of our controversies arise from our mistaking one another's sense, though too often those mistakes are wilful with them who love strife more than truth: and it is industriously endeavoured to pervert each other's words and put senses upon them quite besides, or against our true intent. But if we speak and hear with the greatest candour and sincerity that is possible, we are frequently not understood aright, either through the unskilfulness of him that speaks, to choose the aptest words, and forms of speech, or unattentiveness, incapacity and dulness, in them that hear: frequently from both together. Hence is the conversation of christians so little edifying, though they discourse of useful subjects, which, God knows, there is little of amongst us! Though much more than is commonly apprehended, proceeds from want of love, that should let us into one another's minds and hearts.

Our very sermons, when we study to make important things as plain as we can, are lost upon the most. Though here we see the advantage of a people's having a love to their minister, which is a mighty orator within themsslves, and will make them endeavour to take in his heart and soul; as on his part, his love to them will make him willing, as we heard from the apostle, to impart, with the gospel, his own soul.* But as to christian converse in this our present state, besides the difficulty of understanding one another, all even of them who have great treasures of knowledge in them, are not alike conversable and communicative, nor any, at all times. The dearest friends often find one another indisposed, otherwise busy, morose, sower, and out of humour; apt to take, and perhaps, to give offence, on one hand and the other. And whereas we should most intimately converse with ourselves; upon the menti-

* 1 Thess. 2. 8.

oned accounts, we are now very often the worst company that can be to ourselves; through the darkness, confusion, intricacy, and incoherence of our own thoughts; the fervour and tumultuation of ill affections, and the sluggishness, and drowsy torpor of good. And in what case are we to please others by our converse, that have so much cause to be always in a very great degree, displeased with ourselves?

When death shall have disencumbered, and set us free from all sorts of distempers, and brought us into the state of perfect and perfected spirits, how delectable will that society be! when all shall be full of divine light, life, love and joy, and freely communicate, as they have received freely! How pleasant will it be, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God! To converse with angels! Those wise, kind creatures, so full of profound knowledge and benignity; instructed by long, uninterrupted experience and observation of the methods of the divine government, and dispensation; highly pleased with our accession to the general assembly, that rejoiced in the conversion of a sinner, whereby but one was hereafter in due time to be added, much more in the glorification of so many, that are now actually added to them! What delightful communings will there be of the mysteries of nature! of the methods of providence! of the wonders of grace! of the deep and hidden counsels of God! In what part it shall be agreeable to his wisdom and good pleasure, to let them appear and stand in view.

The conferences at the transfiguration made the transported disciples say, it is good to be here; when the glory which, while it oppressed, pleased them. Though this was but a transient view. But above all that is conceivable in that other state, how delectable will their society be in worship! In their unanimous adoration of the ever-blessed God, Father, Son, and Spirit! In how pleasant eternal raptures of delight and praise will all those excellent creatures be, that inhabit and replenish the vast realms of light and bliss; when all behold how the several kinds of being, light, life, excellency, and perfection, by a perpetual efflux spring from the first, the Fountain of all being, the Parent of so glorious and so numerous a progeny, all God-like, and bearing the bright image of their Father! O the inexpressible pleasure of this consociation in worship, perpetually tendered with so absolute a plenitude of satisfaction in the dueness of it! and the gustful apprehension of what those words import, Worthy art thou, O Lord! each one relishing his own act, with just self-approbation and high delight; heightened by their apprehended perfect unanimity, and that there is among them no dissenting vote. Whence it can-

not be but to worship God in spirit and truth, must be to enjoy him. And that he is under no other notion, the more satisfying object of our enjoyment, than as he is the object of our worship. What room or pretence is there now left for unwillingness to die, on the account of relatives we have been wont to converse with in this world: when such an exchange as this is to be made by dying! But,

II. We are also to consider, There might be an intermixture in the temper of this good man's spirit, when he uttered these words, of somewhat faulty and blamable. Which we are to be cautioned against.

1. There might be too little consideration had of the dignity and value of human life; of which the great God takes so particular care to guard and sustain it, both by law and providence. And of this creature man, so noble a part of divine workmanship, and whom he set over all the works of his hands, in this lower world. To propound throwing away at once so many such lives, seems somewhat too precipitant.

2. The words seem not to savour enough of that deference which is due to the God of our lives; whose prerogative it is to kill and to make alive; to measure our time, and number our days. It might have been said, at least, If God will, &c.

3. There might be in them too little gratitude for the mercies of life, or patience of the difficulties of it: somewhat like that of Jonah, Take now, I beseech thee, my life from me.

4. Too little regard to the business of life. It might have been more at leisure considered, is the business done I was born for? Their special business, who were to be the apostle's of our Lord, already called, (Mat. 10. 1. &c.) and instructed in great part of the work of their calling, was apparently too little considered, especially how, or for what his Lord was to die himself, so far as either from his own words, or from the prophets, might have been collected.

5. Nor, perhaps, enough, how awful a thing it was to die! to change states, and pass into eternity! This might, upon this account, be too hastily said. Good old Simeon seemed to have considered the matter more, when he said, Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, &c.

6. And there is reason to apprehend, in these words, too much displicency at the providence of God, in taking away such a man now at such a time; with some appearance of despondency concerning the Christian interest. This Lazarus is thought to have been a wealthy man, though he in the parable is represented otherwise. Christianity was, as yet, a little thing in the world.

Our Lord had signalized himself by his wonderful works, and drawn many eyes upon him, that were at a gaze; but his heavenly doctrine, and the true design of his coming, had entered into the minds of but a few, and they of the meaner sort. Had any of the rulers believed on him? It was yet a dubious twilight, the dawning of the morning. The Spirit that was to convince the world, was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified.* Nicodemus, a rabbi, came to him, but by night. This cause, as still, according to human estimate, depended much on reputation. Men loved (till an over-powering influence bore down all before it) the praise of men more than the praise of God;† and believed not, because they sought honour one of another.‡

It was, now, a mighty loss, to have one such man drop, that lived so near Jerusalem, where our Lord's great work did much lie, but where he chose not to lodge: this was in Bethany, but two miles off, a convenient retreat. The master of the house is himself dislodged: and whereas, though the foxes had holes, and the birds nests, the Son of man had not where to lay his head;§ this disciple might probably think, Where shall be our next resort? Where is there a considerable person to be found, that will hereafter give us harbour and countenance? He might hence be induced, even to utter his *conclamatum est*; *it is past all hope*: and to this purpose say, now he is dead, Let us all go die with him. Their Lord and Master had before told them, of his being ere long to be taken from them; and, that his followers must count upon taking up of their cross daily. And what, might he think, is to become of us, upon whom, left desolate, the stress is to lie of the Christian cause! What storms will be raised against us, whose province it must be, to plant and propogate a new religion in the world! the tenderest concern in all the world, and about which men are most apt to be enraged at any attempt of innovation! And by us, unlearned, uninterested, obscure, and contemptible men! By what he here says, he seems not afraid to die; but he seems afraid to live, and face the storm, and contend with the difficulties of that even hopeless undertaking, which he perceived himself and his companions designed unto. Rather than this, he seems to apprehend a present death was to be chosen.

And I, now, no way doubt, but any serious person, that shall be at the pains to commune with himself, will judge, there may be such quick turns of thoughts this way, and that as those opposite senses of this passage do import; the variety, and con-

* John 7. 39. chap. 16. 8. † chap. 12. 43. ‡ chap. 5. 44.
§ Luke 9. 58.

trariety of principles that are in us, in this imperfect state, makes it no impossible thing, but that, amidst the various agitations of a musing mind, somewhat of grace, and somewhat of sin; yea much of a holy and heavenly temper, with some degree of incogitancy, haste, and faulty distemper, might be vented together in such an expression.

III. And now for the use of it, we must have distinct respect to both these sorts of sense, which the words may admit of. And,

1. For whatsoever of good sense they have in them, let us endeavour to have it deeply impressed, and inwrought into our souls. So far as, upon good and self-justifying accounts, one may wish to die with another, eminently holy and good, let us labour to be in that temper of spirit, that with all reverential submission to the wise, holy, and sovereign will of God, we may ever be ready to go with the first: a good man should need only leave to die. Consider, are we so loose from all worldly enjoyments and designs, as to be capable, when a holy man dies of adopting these words, Let me die with him? Will they fit our spirits? Can we so far comport with them, as to avow it with a heart not reproaching us, that it is only obedience to the supreme Ruler, not terrene inclination, that makes us willing to survive such as we see going off this stage before us? That if he, in whose hands our breath is, will have us still live, we can submit with patience: if he signify his mind he shall die, we can comply with gladness? But,

Do we find it otherwise? Doth the bent of our own spirits urge and press us downward, and fix us to the earth? Are we so within its magnetism? We have a worse evil to fear than bodily death. To be so carnally minded is death, in a far more horrid sense. This temper of mind, to prefer an earthly abode, before the purity and bliss of the heavenly society: is so repugnant to the most constituent principles of a living christian, his faith of the unseen world, his delight in God, his love of the divine presence, and converse with the Father and Son in glory; his hatred of sin, and desire of perfect holiness, that he should rather take another name, than wear that of a christian, in conjunction with thé allowance of so unchristian a spirit; a temper that tends to subvert whole Christianity, and puts a man into a posture of hostility against the cross of Christ, and the very design of his dying. For in contradistinction to them, whose conversation is in heaven, from whence they look for the Saviour, they are become the declared enemies of his cross, who mind earthly things;* preferring an earthly before the heavenly state.

* Phil. 3. 18, 19, 20.

And the apostle tells such (weeping, as he wrote) that their end will be destruction. This I must therefore say, and testify in the Lord, that if any will indulge themselves in such a temper of spirit; and whosoever goes, even of the most excellent of God's saints and ministers, they would (because they love the present world more) stay with the last; as to such, our preaching is vain, and their faith is vain. But if there have been any within the compass of your knowledge and acquaintance, of whom dying, or lately dead, you could say, let me die with him, or die to be with him, of whom would you rather say it, than of the excellent Dr. Bates!

But do you expect I should give you a distinct and full account of him? Many of you know, or may easily apprehend, I have not been in circumstances by which it could be so much as possible to me. The surprising, overwhelming tidings of his death, with the signification of my being expected to do this part, first reached me, by just estimate, at about two hundred miles distance. Nor did any thing to that purpose, from such as were concerned, come to my hands till a fortnight after his decease. At my return, towards the end of the week preceding this sad solemnity, I had my own charge from which I had been long absent, to provide for against the Lord's day; after which only one day intervened, wherein thoughts that accompanied me in my way, were to be reduced into some order. But had I had never so much time and leisure, I cannot but reflect on what was said of that famous Roman, to give the just praises of Cicero, *Cicerone laudatore opus fuerit.** *There was need of Cicero himself to be the encomiast.* No man knows how to speak becomingly of the excellencies of Dr. Bates, that hath not the eloquence of Dr. Bates! He did that office most laudably for divers others, for those reverend, and truly great men, Dr. Manton, Mr. Clarkson, Dr. Jacomb, and the admirable Mr. Baxter. But now there is no man left to do it suitably for him, that is, that both is fit and willing. So that this part comes to be devolved upon the unfittest among many.

Yet thus, while others have declined it, out of a modest opinion of its being above them, whose abilities, and conveniencies for the performance, did much more concur: this looks like an art and contrivance of providence, to greaten him the more, that every one reckons him too great for their commendation: and, that consequently, he is to pass out of our world as one too big for our praises, with no encomium, or that which is next to none.

Though I first had the opportunity, and great pleasure of his

* Livius.

acquaintance, above forty years ago, yet I have no present way while I am writing this, of knowing, or recollecting, with certainty, any thing of the earlier days of his life. As therefore, the case is, the little I shall say of him, shall be, not by way of history, but of character. Nor in giving somewhat of that, can I well omit,—

(1.) To take notice of, what must with every one come first in view, namely, his self-recommending aspect, composed of gravity and pleasantness, with the graceful mien, and comeliness of his person. That was said upon no slight consideration of the nature of man, from unbribed common estimate, that whatever a man's virtuous endowment be, it is the more taking and acceptable, as coming,—*E pulchro corpore, from a handsome, well-framed body.* God had designed him to circumstances, and a station, not obscure in the world, and had accordingly formed him with advantage; so that his exterior, and first aspectable part might draw respect. And though the treasure to be lodged there, was to be put into an earthen vessel, yet even that was wrought, *Meliore luto,* of finer, or more accurately figured, and better turned clay. He was to stand before kings;* you know in what relation he stood to one, as long as was convenient for some purposes; and how frequent occasion he had of appearing (never unacceptably) before another. His concern lay not only with mean men,† though he could tell also how to condescend to the meanest. His aspect and deportment was not austere, but both decently grave and amiable, such as might command at once both reverence and love; and was herein not a lying, but the true picture of his mind.

I may (to this purpose) borrow his own words (and whose could I more rightfully borrow, or to so much advantage?) concerning that excellent person, Alderman Ashhurst, whose fragrant memory will long survive the age he lived in. And, O that his example might govern in London as long as his name lasts! Of him the doctor says, § A constant serenity reigned in his countenance, the visible sign of the divine calm in his breast; the peace of God that passes all understanding! And who could have said this but Doctor Bates! Or so appositely have applied what had a higher author! So expressively! so fully! so truly! and justly was it spoken! But also, of whom could this have been more fitly said, *Mutato nomine, by change of name,* than of Dr. Bates! How rarely should we see a counten-

* Prov. 22. 29. † Ibid.

§ Epistle to the Funeral Sermon for Mr. Benjamin Ashhurst, dedicated to Sir Henry.

ance so constant, and so faithful an index, of an undisturbed, composed mind? Through that, if we look into this, how rich furniture of the inner man should we soon perceive and admire!

(2.) His natural endowments and abilities appeared to every server, great, much beyond the common rate. His apprehension quick and clear. His reasoning faculty acute, prompt and expert: so as readily and aptly to produce, and urge closely, the stronger and more pregnant arguments, when he was to use them; and soon to discern the strength of arguments, if he was to answer them. His judgment penetrating and solid, stable and firm, His wit never vain or light, but most facetious and pleasant, by the ministry of a fancy, both very vigorous and lively; and most obedient to his reason; always remote both from meanness and enormity. His memory was admirable, and never failed, that any one could observe, not impaired by his great age of seventy four: insomuch, that speeches made upon solemn occasions, of no in-elegant composition (some whereof the world hath seen, though extorted from him with great difficulty, and by much importunity) he could afterwards repeat to a word, when he had not penned one word of them before. And his sermons, wherein nothing could be more remote from ramble, he constantly delivered from his memory. And hath sometime told me, with an amicable freedom, that he partly did it, to teach some that were younger, to preach without notes. His learning, and acquired knowledge of things, usually reckoned to lie within that compass, was a vast treasure. He had lived a long, studious life; an earnest gatherer, and (as the phrase is) * devourer of books. With which he had so great an acquaintance, and they that were acquainted with him so well knew it, that one, who was for the dignity of his station, and the eminency of his endowments, as great a pillar and as excellent an ornament of the church, as any it hath had for many an age, hath been known to say, that where he to collect a library, he would as soon consult Doctor Bates, as any man he knew. He was, indeed, himself a living one.

He knew how to choose, and was curious in his choice. Whatsoever belonged to the finer, and more polite sort of literature, was most grateful to him, when it fell into a conjunction with what was also most useful. Nothing mean was welcome into his library, or detained there, much less thought fit to be entertained and laid up in the more private repository of his mind. To speak of the particular parts of his learning wherein he excelled, were to trifle, when there are so many

* Helluc.

visible effects extant, that enough inform the world. His divine knowledge, and the abundant grace of God in him, have been eminently conspicuous the same way, in great part; but otherwise also. For his private conversation was so instructive, so quickening, in reference to what lay within the confines of religion and godliness, that no man of ordinary capacity could hear his usual, and most familiar discourses, but either with great negligence, or great advantage.

When he hath been to consider a case of conscience, I have sometimes had opportunity to observe, with what wisdom, what caution, what tenderness, he hath spoken to it, and with what compass of thought; turning it round this way, and that; most strictly regarding our sacred rule, and weighing all circumstances that concerned the case: but withal, taking occasion from thence (when the persons concerned have not been present) to magnify and adore the grace of God; which he would do most pathetically, and with great affection; for keeping us out of the way of temptation; which he thought was too little considered by christians; and thereby saving us from the entanglements, and perplexities of spirit, as well as from the scandals that befel many. I never knew any more frequent and affectionate in the admiration of divine grace, upon all occasions, than he was; or who had a deeper sense of the impotency and pravity of human nature.

His discourses were usually (as our rule directs) savoury, as seasoned with salt, and such as might minister grace to the hearers. He was frequently visited by persons of higher rank, and that made no mean figure in the world. Of whom, some have acknowledged, that going abroad upon hazardous employments, they have received from him such wise and pious counsels; as have stuck by them, and they have been the better for afterwards. Though in his communing with the many friends, whom he irresistibly constrained to covet his most desirable society, he did not exclude the things that were of common human concernment, he still discovered a temper of mind most intent upon divine things. He did not look with a slight or careless eye upon the affairs of the public; but consider, and speak of them as a man of prospect, and large thought, with much prudence and temper; not curiously prying into the arcana of government, or reasons of state, which it was necessary should be under a veil; much less rudely censuring what it was not fit should be understood: but what was open to common view, he was wont to discourse of instructively, both as lying under the direction of providence, and as relating to the interest of religion.

Nor was he wont to banish out of his conversation, the pleasantness that fitly belonged to it: for which his large acquain-

tance, with a most delightful variety of story, both ancient and modern, gave him advantage beyond most; his judicious memory being a copious promptuary of what was profitable and facetious, and disdaining to be the receptacle of useless trash. To place religion in a morose sourness was remote from his practice, his judgment, and his temper. But his discourses, taking in often things of a different nature, were interwoven with religion, and centred in it; especially such things as were most intimate and vital to it; of those things he was wont to speak with that savour and relish, as plainly shewed he spake not forcedly, or with affectation, as acting a part; but from the settled temper and habit of his soul. Into what transports of admiration of the love of God, have I seen him break forth! when some things foreign, or not immediately relating to practical godliness, had taken up a good part of our time. How easy a step did he make of it from earth to heaven! Such as have been wont, in a more stated course, to resort to him, can tell, whether, when other occasions did fall in, and claim their part in the discourses of that season, he did not usually send them away with somewhat that tended to better their spirits, and quicken them in their way heaven-ward? With how high flights of thought and affection was he wont to speak of the heavenly state! Even like a man much more of kin to that other world than to this! And for his ministerial qualifications and labours, do I need to say any thing to themselves, who had the benefit thereof? Either them, who have so many years lived under his most fruitful, enlightening, quickening, edifying ministry? Whether week by week, as his beloved, peculiarly privileged charge at Hackney, that mournful, desolate people! who have been fed with the heavenly, hidden manna, and with the fruits of the tree of life that grows in the midst of the paradise of God; so prepared, and presented to them, and made pleasant to their taste, as few besides have ever had: but now sit in sorrow, hopeless of full, or any equal relief, but by transportation into that paradise itself, whence all their refections were wont to come! Or do I need to inform such inhabitants of London, as in a doubled three monthly course, have for many years, in throng-assembly, been wont to hang upon his lips? To whose, if to any one's in our days, the characters belonged, of the* wise, and the righteous man's lips, which are said to disperse knowledge; and (which is therefore most agreeable) to feed many. Or can it be needful to acquaint the world, who have volumes of his discourses, or sermons in their hands? Or tell them of their singular excellencies who can as well tell me? I can speak to none of his great worth and accomplishments, as a richly fur-

* Prov. 15. 7. Chap. 10. 7.

nished, and most skilful dispenser of divine knowledge, and of the mysteries of the gospel of Christ, an instructed scribe, able to bring forth of his treasury things new and old; but who may say to me, as those Samaritan christians, We believe him to be such; not because of thy saying; for we have heard (or read) him ourselves. And they may say so with judgment upon this proof, that shall consider both the select, choice, and most important matter of his tractates, and sermons, published, or unpublished. And the peculiar way and manner of his tractation thereof.

For the former: the choice of subjects; and of such materials of discourse as are to be reduced and gathered into them, discovers as much of the judgment, spirit, and design of the compiler, as any thing we can think of. When we consider what sort of things a man's mind hath been exercised and taken up about, through so long a course and tract of time; we may see what things he counted great, important, necessary to be insisted on, and most conducing to the ends, which one of his calling and station ought to design and aim at. And are thereupon to appeal to ourselves, whether he did not judge and design aright, and as he ought? As what could be of greater importance, than to discover the harmony of God's attributes, in the work of saving sinners? the final happiness of man? the four last things, &c.? What more important than that of spiritual perfection? Which last he dropped, as Elijah his mantle, when he was to ascend into that state, most perfectly perfect; wherein that which he had been discoursing of, finally terminates. Read it, and invocate the Lord God of Elijah, saying, Where is he? Nor were his discoursres of less consequence, that in his stated course, he delivered to his constant hearers. They were always much allied to the lamp, and did not need to fear the brightest light. His last sermon in this place (who of us thought it the last! hearing it delivered with so much life and spirit?) challenges our re-consideration over and over. It was about sins against knowledge, from Luke 12, 47. A warning to the age, uttered (though not faintly) as with his dying breath. O that it could have reached ears and hearts, as far as the concern of it doth reach! The sins of our days, of professors, and of others, are more generally sins against knowledge, than heretofore, and may make us expect and dread the more stripes that text speaks of.

As for his manner and way of handling what he untertook, we may use the words which he recites from the incomparable Bishop Wilkins concerning Mr. Baxter; which, no doubt, if there had then been the occasion, he would have judged not unapplicable here also: That he cultivated every subject he handled,

and had he lived in the age of the fathers, he would have been one. His method, in all his discourses, might be exposed to the most critical censurer. What could be more accurate! And for his style, it was even inimitably polite, and fine: but to him so natural, that it was uneasy to have used a coarser style, than to others, so neat a one as his was. Nor is it to be thought strange, that there should be in this, a peculiarity; style being to any man, as appropriate upon the matter, as his visage or voice: and as immediately depending on the temper of the mind, in conjunction with fancy, as that is, more or less, brisk, lively, and vigorous; as the other do on the complexion of the body, or the disposition of the organs of speech. They that would in this case attempt to force nature, would, I suspect, be very aukward at it, would bungle scurvily, and soon find, they had better be content to creep on all four, than aim to fly and soar with borrowed wings, or stolen feathers. If God with a man's nature gives a disposition of this kind, it may, in his younger years, admit of innocent improvement: but that which is most peculiar to any, in this respect is what one insensibly slides into, with no more design than one hath to walk after this or that manner; by which yet many persons are known, and distinguishable from other men.

But I doubt not, that excellency in any such kind, as hath been anciently observed of poetry and oratory, must have its foundation in nature; and they that will strive against that stream, will soon perceive, that such proverbial sayings were grounded upon prudent observation and long experience, that a mercury is not to be made of every log; and that nothing is to be attempted *invita Minerva, or against one's genius*, and natural inclination. Therefore that monition, *lege historiam, ne fias historia*, one may vary and say, *Cave, &c. Take heed of a proverb, lest thou become a proverb.* That is easy and pleasant which is natural.*. And now when the grace of God supervenes, and doth exalt and sublimate nature, it makes that mean beginning, and its progress into use and custom, which is said to be a second nature, subservient to very high and excellent purposes; as is eminently conspicuous in the doctor's peculiar way of preaching and writing: especially in his frequent most apt similitudes and allusions, to be attributed to a brisk and vivid fancy, regulated by judgment, and sanctified by divine grace, so as greatly to serve his pious purpose; to illustrate the truth he designed to recommend, and give it the greatest advantage of entering into the mind with light and pleasure; and at once both to instruct and delight his reader or hearer.

* Παν φυσικον ηδυ.

And so much more grateful have his illustrations been, by how much the more they have been surprising, and remote from any forethought in them that read, or heard. And I may here freely put his most constant attentive hearers, upon recollecting, whether he have not usually pleased them, by surprising them? (For I know there are surprisals ungrateful enough.) And in most sermons, whether they did not meet with what they did not expect from him; and might in vain have expected from any body else.

Some it is possible, may find fault with that in this kind, to which they can do nothing like themselves; who yet, I hope, may admit of conviction of their own fault herein, by gentler means, than by being put in mind of the fable. They might upon the matter as well find fault, that God had made him a taller man than the most, perhaps than themselves; or of a more comely complexion, or that all were not of one stature, size, or feature. If any do, it is most probably such, to whom one may truly say, they blame what they could not mend, nor he help; at least, without much pain to himself, and to no purpose. One may venture to say, that in that fine way of expressing himself, which was become habitual to him, he much more pleased others than himself. For in the excellent Mr. Baxter he highly commends much another way, saying of him, He had a marvellous felicity and copiousness in speaking. There was a noble negligence in his style: for his great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words* Very excellent men excel in different ways: the most radiant stones may differ in colour, when they do not in value.

His judgment in ecclesiastical matters was to be known by his practice; and it was such, that he needed not care who knew it. He was for entire union of all visible christians, (or saints, or believers, which in Scripture are equivalent terms) meaning by Christianity what is essential thereto, whether doctrinal, or practical; as by humanity we mean what is essential to man, severing accidents, as not being of the essence; and by visibility, the probable appearance thereof: and for free communion of all such, of whatsoever persuasion, in extra-essential matters, if they pleased. And this design he vigorously pursued, as long as there was any hope; desisting when it appeared hopeless, and resolving to wait till God should give a spirit suitable hereto; from an apprehension that when principles on all hands were so easily accommodable, and yet that there was with too many, a remaining insuperable reluctancy to the thing itself, God must work the cure, and not man. Accounting

* In his funeral sermon, page 90.

also, in the mean time, that notwithstanding misrepresentations, it was better to cast a mantle over the failings of brethren, than be concerned to detect and expose them : knowing that if we be principally solicitous for the name of God, he will in his own way and time take care of ours. And in this sentiment he was not alone.

But now is this great luminary, this burning and shining light (not extinct, but) gone out of our horizon. We for a season rejoiced in this light, and are we not to mourn for its disappearance? Yet not without hope. O! the unconceivable loss of his domestical relatives! who in respect of his most private capacity and conversation, are deprived of such a head, father, and guide! Yet in this lies their advantage, that since nothing that is mortal can fill up his room, they are under a necessity to betake themselves thither, where the surest and fullest relief is to be had. Having in the mean time among mortals, a far greater number of fellow-sufferers, and fellow-mourners, to bear a part with them in their sorrows, and ready to afford them all suitable consolation, than most in this world can be capable of expecting in such a case. Let those of his own peculiar charge, let those that were wont, though not so often, in a stated course, to hear him in this place, with all other his more occasional hearers, mourn, that they are to hear no more his weighty sentences, his sweet honey-dropping words: let them mourn that never heard to purpose, that were never allured, never won, that were always deaf to this charmer, though charming so wisely. Let those that have got good by him mourn, that in this way they are to get no more; those that have got none, that they have lost so much of their day; that they are to be addressed by this persuasive advocate for Christ and their own souls no more. Let his brethren, all of us, mourn, that we have lost so prudent, so humble, so instructive, so encouraging a guide, so bright an ornament from among us.

But let none of us mourn without hope. God will be a husband to the widow trusting in him, and the father of the fatherless, taking God in Christ for their father and their God. He hath not forgot the titles he hath assumed. He can also find, or make for his widowed church, a pastor after his own heart: and the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, that gave his life for the sheep, though he was dead, is alive, and lives for evermore. All his hearers, though they are no more to hear his pleasant human voice sounding in their ears, if they attend and listen, may hear a divine voice crying after them, This is the way, walk in it. And let them know that the gospel he

preached is immortal, and never dies, though all flesh is grass: and his own books, though he is dead, yet speak. We his brethren were to follow him, as he followed Christ; who will himself be with us always to the end. The work wherein he was engaged was common to him and us. Herein if we follow him, though not with equal steps, faithfully endeavouring to turn many to righteousness, we shall shine as he doth, like the stars in the firmament, we need not be solicitous, though not with equal lustre; as one star differs from another in glory.*

The cause wherein he was engaged unto his death, and from which no offered emoluments or dignities could ever draw him, was not that of a party; for he was of none, and was of too large a mind to be of any, but that noble cause of union and communion with all christians that hold the head. That cause is not dead with him. Now that he is dead, we are to say, as that is the voice of the Christian faith, of divine and brotherly love, Let us die with him, but not as it is the voice of despondency or despair. Let us covet to be with him in that blessed state; the reality whereof we believe, and of which our faith is to be to us the substance and evidence.

I know no good man that knowing him would not say, Let me die with him. I very well know who would: and if breasts could be laid open to inspection as by a glass, do know in whose breast this sense would be found, engraven as with the point of a diamond. O! that my soul were in his soul's stead; or if the supreme Disposer had thought fit, or seen an equal fitness for translation, that I had died with him. But, knowing his much greater usefulness in this world, O! that I had died for him. For since it is expressly said, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren,† a life that could regularly and effectually have redeemed his, had been laid down for many, in that one of holy, prudent, heavenly Dr. Bates. This is the sense of one not weary, blessed be God, of the business of life, and that enjoys as much of the comforts of life as any man can reasonably wish, scarce any one more. But it must be confessed, as this world was not worthy of this servant of Christ, it is become far less worthy now so excellent a person hath left it. His love, his converse, was pleasant beyond what can be expressed! It is now a grievance not to have a part with the silent mourners, when lamentations could freely have been poured forth, without noise or interruption! As the case is, necessity lays a restraint, and leaves it an easier thing to die than weep out; otherwise can one be shy, in a way that can admit it, to tell the world, that to live in it, now he is dead out of it, much less deserves the name

* 1 Cor. 15. 41. † 1 John 3. 16.

of life! It can be felt, that those words among the many divine raptures of that holy man,‡ have a most perceptible meaning; when I got health, thou tookest away my life; and more, for my friends die. If one may innocently borrow words from so impure a mouth, they are very expressive; I scarce count myself a man, when without Jamblichus.§

Here were two souls knit together as the soul of one man! What there is of present separation shall be but for a little while. And by how much the separation is more grievous, the re-union will be with the stronger propension, and the more delightful everlasting cohesion. As also separation from this terrene clog will be much the easier: one great weight is added above, to pulley up what ought to ascend thither. How can that but be a blessed state, into which he that is essential love hath caught up such a man! One in so great part transformed before into the same likeness, and fitted to dwell in love! And accordingly God took him, even kissed away his soul, as hath been said of those great favourites of heaven; did let him die without being sick; vouchsafed him that great privilege, which a good man would choose before many, not to out-live serviceableness. To live till one be weary of the world, not till the world be weary of him! Thus he prayed wisely, thus God answered graciously.

2. But be it far from us to say, Let us die with him, as despairing of our cause; if our cause be not that of any self-distinguished party, but truly that common Christian cause, of which you have heard. While it is the divine pleasure to continue us here, let us be content and submit, to live and own it, to live and serve it, to our uttermost. If ever God design good days to the Christian church on earth, this is the cause that must prevail, and triumph in a glorious conquest over death. But I must freely tell you my apprehensions, which I have often hinted, that I fear it must die first; I mean a temporary death; I fear it for it hath been long gradually dying already; and spiritual diseases which have this tendency, are both sinful and penal. Lazarus's death and resurrection, I think to have been meant, not only for a sort of prolusion to the death and resurrection of Christ, both personal but mystical. I only say this for illustration, not for proof. That sickness and death of his, was not in order to a permanent death, but for the glory of God, that when the case was deplorate and hopeless, and he four days buried, he might surprisingly spring up again alive. I know not but the sickness and death of this our incomparably worthy friend, and (for ought I know of many more of us) may be ap-

‡ Herbert. § Julian Epist. ad Jambl.—αν—μη συν.

pointed the same way to be for the glory of God; that is, as tending to introduce that death which is to pass upon our common cause; which such men help to keep alive, by their earnest strugglings, though in a languishing, fainting condition every hour.

Think me not so vain as to reckon exclusively the cause of dissenters, the cause I now speak of; no, no, I speak of the common cause of all serious, sober-minded christians, within the common rule or without it. I neither think any one party to include all sobriety of mind, or to exclude all insobriety. But I apprehend converting work to be much at a stand, within the pales that men have set up, severing one party from another, and without them. Few are any where brought home to God through Christ. And God knows too few design it, otherwise than to make proselytes to their several parties: and this is thought a glorious conversion. Serious piety and Christianity languish every-where. Many that have a name to live are dead, and putrified, already stink! common justice and righteousness are fled from among us. Sincerely good and pious men die away in the natural sense apace. You know if deaths and burials should, in the weekly bills exceed births, and other accessions to the city, whither this tends. When so many great lights are withdrawn, both such as were within the national church constitution, and such as were without it: is there no danger God should also remove the candlestick?

Our obduration and insensible stupidity portends a deadly darkness to be drawing on. And must such lives go, to make a way for God's anger? and lead on a more general and more dreadful approaching death? Oh! that God would rend the heavens and come down! He may yet melt our hearts, and make them flow at his presence, notwithstanding their mountainous, rocky height and hardness. This may be the means of saving some souls, and of deferring the common calamity. A great thing it would be to have it deferred. What a privilege would many servants of Christ count it, not to live to the day when the Spirit of the living God shall be generally retired and gone; and atheism, scepticism, infidelity, worldliness, and formality, have quite swallowed up our religion? While such men as we have lost lived, they did, and such do, as instruments, keep somewhat of serious religion alive, under our several forms, but as ready to expire. But though it should seem generally to have expired, let us believe it shall revive. When our confidences and vain boasts cease, The temple of the Lord! The temple of the Lord! Lo, here is Christ, and there is Christ: and one sort ceases to magnify this church, and another that, and a universal death is come upon us, then (and I am afraid, not till then) is to be

expected a glorious resurrection, not of this or that party; for living, powerful religion, when it recovers, will disdain the limits of a party. Nor is it to be thought, that religion, modified by the devised distinctions, of this or that party, will ever be the religion of the world. But the same power that makes us return into a state of life, will bring us into a state of unity, in divine light and love. Then will all the scandalous marks and means of division among christians vanish; and nothing remain as a test or boundary of Christian communion, but what hath its foundation, as such, in plain reason, or express revelation. Then as there is one body and one Spirit, will that Almighty Spirit so animate and form this body, as to make it every-where amiable, self-recommending, and capable of spreading and propogating itself, and to increase with the increase of God. Then shall the Lord be one, and his name one, in all the earth.

A FUNERAL

SERMON,

FOR THAT VERY REVEREND AND MOST LABORIOUS SERVANT OF CHRIST, IN THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY,

MR. MATTHEW MEAD,

WHO

Deceased October 16. 1699.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,

JOHN AND FRANCES,

THE

LORD AND LADY HAVERSHAM.

May it please your honours,

THE request of the mournful widow, and other relatives of the worthy person deceased, concurring with my own inclination, left with me no room to deliberate concerning this inscription. I easily apprehend how quick and deep a sense you both have of the loss of such another valuable person from off this earth ; having so lately borne your part, in lamenting the decease of one you much valued also. Upon which account I put into your hands, a discourse on those words, John 11. 16. Let us also go, that we may die with him.

Such persons leave this world so fast, that it grows a more difficult choice with whom to live, than with whom to die. When on that sad occasion I did set myself to consider that passage of holy Scripture, I had seen some expositors that made it a doubt whether that were meant of Lazarus, or of our Lord himself. Some of good note thought the latter : for which, was plausibly to be alleged

what we find ver. 8. and that in this verse 16. the words were spoken not to Christ, but to the fellow-disciples. That doubt was not to have been moved in an assembly, where was neither time nor a fit season to discuss it. And though I might more conveniently, I shall not say much to it now, only I judge, that without necessity the present coherence was not to be torn. When by the series of discourse the same *him* seems plainly to be referred to, in the close of the 15th verse, and of this 16th.—Lazarus is dead, ver. 14.—nevertheless, let us go to *him*, ver. 15.—Let us also go, that we may die with *him*. It was little needful to say to Christ, Let us go, whose mind appeared set upon going already; but to the disciples, who drew back. Besides that reverence might restrain from saying this to our Lord, when what was to be proposed was matter of hortation, not of inquiry. Though sometimes they feared even to ask him a question also; as Luke 9. 45. And they might the rather be now under a present awe, from the rebuke, or expostulatory answer, he had given them, for their objecting against going into Judea. Especially, so as not to signify a remaining fear, which he had so newly checked. Therefore Thomas's speech, directed to his fellow-disciples, but not out of Christ's hearing (for we have no reason to suppose that he separated them from him, that he might say this to them apart) is so ordered, as not to import fear of death, but love to the deceased.

If any should object, that Thomas could not mean dying *with* Lazarus, when he was told, he was already dead. That scarce deserves answer to any one that understands the latitude of the particle rendered with, especially, that it frequently signifies after, and not always with. And very often notes nothing of time at all. And therefore may here mean no more, than let us go that we may die too, or die as well as he. All this I say, not that I have heard any person in our days, object against, or plead for, this or that sense of these words: but knowing they have been differently understood; and this being the first opportunity I had to take public notice of the difference, I am not ill pleased that I have now, this occasion of representing it to so competent judges, partly to prevent objection, or at least, to shew with what temper of mind, any such different apprehensions, in matters of no greater moment, ought to be looked upon. Nor shall I here vie authorities of commentators that have gone this way, or that, in this matter. Therefore I name none: only some, of as great name as any, have judged this the more probable opinion, which I have followed.

Many instances might be given, wherein, when matters extra-essential to the sum of religion, are delivered, one sense must be pitched upon, though another, very divers (of which there cannot be two) is not to be demonstrated impossible. In which case, I much prefer a tacit following that which one chooses, before a conceited confidence, and crying down of the other. For confident clamour neither admits light, nor tends to enlighten any body.

In the present case, it makes no difference to any disadvantage. For if we desire to be united in death, or in that state to which it introduces, with this or that holy man: to be with our blessed Lord in that state, must be much more desirable. But the departure of the excellent ones of the earth from it, leaves us less here of present attractive, and gives us a very threatening prospect and presage of what we are to expect for the future.

Your lordship's great respect to this servant of Christ, was even hereditary, and descended to him, by you from your family; as I have often heard him acknowledge, with great sense of obligation. And, madam, your ladyship's great value of him, though it might take its first rise from so near, and judicious a relative, could not but receive a great increase from his known worth, and your own discerning judgment. I pray, not doubting it, that with whatsoever kindness you have received any prophet, or other servant of Christ, in that name, you may have a proportionable reward; and am my most honoured lord and lady;

Your most obliged, humble servant,

In the work of the gospel,

JOHN HOWE.

A

FUNERAL SERMON.

1 Tim. iv. 16.

—*Thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

THESE words I principally design to insist upon at this time, and on this sad and mournful occasion; but not without retrospection to the foregoing verse, and the former part of this; which runs thus, verse 15. Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all: ver. 16. Take heed to thyself, and thy doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. This whole foregoing context contains precepts, which reduced to practice, afford an eminent example and pattern of a true gospel preacher: or, as the words are, ver. 6. of a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine; as these last words shew the blessed end and issue of such a one's ministry: that is, that he shall save himself; which must be looked upon as certain: and them that hear him; that is, as much as in him lies, he shall herein do his part, and what is incumbent upon him, to the saving of his hearers. These latter words hold forth the double end which a minister of Christ is to pursue, the saving his own and his people's souls. The foregoing words, considered in reference to these, contain the *proper means* he is to use in order to this twofold end. That is, he is to meditate much on the great things of the

gospel. He is to be wholly *in* them,* as the words literally import which we read, He is to give himself wholly *to* them. He is to be continually increasing in the knowledge of God, and that so as not to know only to himself, but so as to make known what he knows. He is especially (though that be the common duty of christians) to turn all to the use of edifying, Eph. 4. 29. that his profiting may appear to all. For though Timothy was at this time a young man, yet the most grown did always need to be still growing. None have here attained their *ne plus ultra*, but may still write for the motto, *plus ultra*, all their days; even Paul the aged, as he styles himself to Philemon, tells the Philippians, (both those epistles being dated from Rome, and supposed to be written about the same time, when he was first there) that he had not yet attained, in point of the transforming knowledge of Christ, chap. 3. 10, 11. And unto what pitch soever he grew, it was still in order to communication. He writes to the Corinthians, that he determined to know nothing among them ‡ which is so to know, as to make known, nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. And to the Ephesians, that he would have them understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ;‖ no doubt that their salvation might be promoted thereby. And hereupon, in great part, depends a minister's own salvation; as hereafter will further appear. But besides, he is to take heed to himself, and see to the good state of his own soul; he is to take heed to his doctrine, not to corrupt, or handle deceitfully the word of God, but represent it sincerely, and as the truth is in Jesus. He is to continue in them; that is, in the things he before exhorts him to meditate on, and be wholly in them; to continue in the faith of what was to be believed: and the practice of what was to be done; and in pressing and insisting on both. And all for the mentioned ends, that he might both save himself and those that hear him. And it is this twofold end of a minister's care and labour, that will take us up at this time. This is that therefore, which as God shall help, I am to evince and apply, namely, That a minister of Christ is to make it his business, both to save himself and his hearers.—I am, as the text directs, to speak of these two ends conjunctly.—And here I shall not spend time, or use a liberty beyond what is obvious and useful, in inquiring into the counsel of God, why

* Ἐν τουτοις ισθι. In a better than the Poet's sense, scire tuum nihil est.

‡ 1 Cor. 2. 2. ‖ Eph. 3. 4.

he makes use of such in order to the saving of others, as need to be saved themselves also. But shall principally insist, that since it appears to be God's pleasure to make use of such, they should therefore most earnestly concern themselves, and be very intent upon carrying on this design, namely, of their own, conjunctly with that of their hearers salvation. Yet as to the former of these,

I. Somewhat it may be requisite to say, concerning this course and method, which we find the wisdom and good pleasure of God have pitched upon, for the carrying on a saving design in this world: to make use of such for the saving of others as do need to endeavour the saving of themselves. And here I shall briefly shew;—how it is to be understood: and—how the fitness of this course may be evinced.

1. As to the former we shall briefly note; that we must be cautious to understand aright, how, and in what sense any one can be said, to save himself, or another. Therefore,

(1.) It must be understood so, as to keep at a remote and awful distance from intrenching upon a divine prerogative. It being most expressly said, Isa. 43. 11. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour: and chap. 45. 21, 22. There is no God beside me, a just God and a Saviour, there is none beside me. Look to me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. Which plainly signifies, that in the highest sense, to save, is most appropriate to Deity, especially with an everlasting salvation, as it is expressed, ver. 17. of this chap. 45. Israel shall be saved, in or by the Lord, with an everlasting salvation. And that to be so a Saviour, is equally incommunicable, as to be God. How gloriously doth he triumph in this excellent peculiarity of the Godhead, in his expostulations with Job, chap. 40. 9. Hast thou an arm like God! As if it had been said, "Come let us compare; stretch out that weak, withered, ulcerous arm of thine. Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency, array thyself with glory and beauty; try if thou canst make thyself shine in Godlike splendour: cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: behold every one that is proud and abase him. Try thy power upon thy fellow mortals. See if thou canst crush all the haughty ones of this world, bring them down, and bind their faces in the dust of the grave. And (to recall thee to the greater things mentioned before) try if thou canst form me such another earth as this, establish its foundations, lay its corner stone. If thou canst countermand the motions, bind up the influences of the stars in the heavens;" then will I confess unto thee, that thy own right-hand can save thee, ver. 14.

It is, it seems as much above created power to be a Saviour, as to be the Creator or Ruler of the world. And how should we dread to think of usurping the title and office of the great Immanuel, the Saviour, who is therefore called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins, Matt. 1. 21.

(2.) Yet there is a true sense wherein the saving act and power, are otherwise and very variously ascribed. Sometimes to faith, Luke 7. 50. Thy faith hath saved thee. Sometimes to hope, We are saved by hope, Rom. 8. 24. Sometimes to baptism, 1 Pet. 3. 21. Baptism doth also now save us not the putting away the filth of the flesh, &c. Sometimes to husbands and wives in reference to one another, 1 Cor. 7. 16. So is the gospel called the gospel of our salvation, Eph. 1. 13. And to you is the word of this salvation sent, Acts 13. 26. So are we exhorted to save ourselves, Acts 2. 40. And others, Jude 23. Others save with fear. Thus in lower matters, is the act of writing, for instance, ascribed to the pen, to the hand that uses it, and to the writer himself, that moves both; and we have no difficulty to understand those different forms of speech: nor is there a greater difficulty in the present case, so to ascribe to the creature the low subordinate agency, which in distinct capacities may belong to it, as in the mean time to reserve to God and Christ, the supreme agency, which is most peculiar and appropriate to divine power and grace, 1 Pet. 1. 5. Eph. 2. 8.

2. We now come next to shew, that it was very manifestly agreeable to the most accurate wisdom of God, to employ such in the design and work of saving others, as were themselves concerned, and needed to be saved too, that were to be upon the same bottom themselves with the rest; and to venture their own souls, and their everlasting concernments the same way, and into the same hands. And this we shall labour to clear and make evident by degrees.

(1.) It was fit, since creatures were to be employed in this work, to make use of intelligent creatures, such as could understand their own errand, and act with design in pursuance of it.

(2.) Mankind was universally lost, so as all do need being saved themselves.

(3.) Therefore no intelligent creatures else could be employed herein, but the unfallen angels.

(4.) We may adventure to say after God, and when he hath so determined the matter himself, though it was not fit for us to have said it before him, as if we would direct the Spirit of the Lord, or as his counsellors would instruct him, (Isa. 40. Rom. 11.) that it was more suitable to make use to this purpose of

sinful men, than of sinless angels. Let us sever and lay aside herein, what may at first sight, seem specious, but is really not considerable in this matter, as that men, in the same miserable circumstances with those whom they are to persuade, that they may save them will be so much the more earnest and importunate, use so much the more pressing arguments, as having been upon the brink of hell, and the borders of destruction, for we suppose such as are most likely to promote the salvation of others, to have been made sensible of their own undone, lost state, and to be in a way of recovery themselves. But hereupon it may also be supposed, they will therefore so much the more pathetically plead with sinners. Their knowledge of the terrors of the Lord will urge them to persuade men, (2 Cor. 5. 11.) and make them eloquent at it. But what! more than angels? When the apostle, (1 Cor. 13.) supposes one speaking with the tongue of men and angels, doth he not intend a gradation, and signify the latter far to excel? And are we to suppose that the benignity of their own natures, their kindness to man, and their perfect conformity, and obediential compliance and subjection to the will of their sovereign Lord, would not have obliged them to do their uttermost, if he had sent them upon such errands? We cannot doubt it. But,

[1.] It is apparent that what the blessed God doth in pursuance of this saving design, he doth to the praise of the glory of his grace, and that it might appear the more conspicuous, in the whole conduct of this affair.

[2.] That it is not within the compass of any created, no not of angelical power, to change the hearts of men, and turn them to God. If angels were the constant preachers in all our assemblies, they could not with all their heavenly eloquence convert one sinner, if the immediate divine power, did not exert itself. The people are willing in the day of his power, who was God-man, as Psal. 110. 3. The Jews at Mount Sinai received the law by the dispensation of angels, yet kept it not, Acts 7. 53.

[3.] Yet if God should put forth his own power, by such a ministration; if angels should appear in glorious array among us, and speak to men with greater advantage, and more persuasive eloquence, than we can conceive; and marvellous effects by divine concurrence should ensue: those great effects among a sort of creatures led by sense, and who judge by the sight of the eye, would all be ascribed to the visibly glorious instrument, not to the supreme Agent, who is invisible and out of sight; even as in effects of another kind, the invisible power and Godhead that do all, are little regarded by stupid man,

whose dull eye stays and rests in the visible outside, and fixes his mind there too.

[4.] Therefore the rich treasures of the gospel, are put into earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power, might be, that is, might appear to be of God, and not of the inferior instrument, 2 Cor. 4. 7.

[5.] In this way of dispensation, wherein God speaks to men liable to the same passions with themselves, he accommodates himself to their frail state, who cannot bear glorious appearances; and to their own option and desires, who say to Moses, (Exod. 20. 19.) Speak thou to us and we will hear, but let not God speak to us lest we die. When they had heard the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words, accompanied with thunders and lightnings, they entreated that they might hear no more, Heb. 12. 19. The celestial glory, while our mould and frame is dust, doth more astonish than instruct. Those soft and pleasant words, This is my beloved Son, —hear him, spoken by a voice from the excellent glory in the transfiguration, made the disciples that heard them sore afraid, and fall on their faces, Mat. 17. 5,6. How would it unhinge the world, and discompose the whole state of civil affairs, if all conversions were to be as Saul's was, when he became Paul, with such concomitant effects, not only on himself but all others present, especially being wrought (as most conversions may be) in numerous assemblies, the convert struck blind for some days, and all that were in the place speechless! Perhaps we have one such instance to let us see how inconvenient it were, such instances should be common; or that this should be God's ordinary way of converting and saving sinners.

[6.] The holding of men in this world under the ministry of men, not of angels, in reference to the affairs of their salvation, is certainly more suitable to the condition of probationers for eternity, and another world; and more aptly subservient to the business of the judgment day, when all the talents men were entrusted with, their natural endowments and faculties, as well as additional advantages, are to be accounted for. We shall hereafter understand better, but may, in good measure, conjecture now, why there is so fixed a gulf by the wisdom and counsel of God, between the two worlds, the visible and invisible, and so little commerce between them.

And whereas in the Old Testament the apparition of angels was more frequent, that passage, the world to come being said not to be put in subjection to angels, seems to signify, the time after the Messiah's appearing should be more entirely left to

the conduct of a gospel ministry, as the connexion, Heb. 2. ver. 4, 5 intimates.

[7.] And though the compassions of men, who have been in danger to perish themselves, cannot be supposed more powerfully to influence them, unto an earnest endeavour of saving them that are in the like danger, than the kindness and benignity of angels would do, if they were so employed; yet their concern to save others, who are also to be saved themselves the same way, is likely, more easily, more generally, more sensibly, to be apprehended by those others, to whom they are to apply themselves upon this account. They have kinder thoughts of one another, than they are like to have of a superior order of creatures. Their own flesh and blood is nearer akin to them: yea, they are more apt to love one another (and consequently to apprehend one another's love) than the blessed God himself. Which is more than intimated in that of that holy apostle, 1 John 4. 20. He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God, whom he hath not seen? Things affect us not merely as they are, but as they are understood. Ministers cannot be kinder to men's souls than the blessed angels, among whom there is a joy for the conversion of a sinner, much more pure, exalted, and sublime, than a human breast is capable of; and, in proportion, more fervent desire of such conversions: but their propensions towards us, though they should be expressed by counsels and precepts that tend to our good, would be less apprehended by most men; they carrying a severity with them, which makes them need such insinuative recommendations, as slide more easily into their minds from creatures of their own order.

[8.] Our Lord himself was so concerned for the saving of souls, as who could be besides? But though before the flood he is said to have preached to the old world, it was by his Spirit in the ministry of Noah, a man like themselves, to whom he preached. But when he thought fit to preach immediately himself, he put on flesh, and dwelt, or did tabernacle among men as one of them, John 1. 14. So Moses foretold: a prophet like to me shall God raise up, him shall you hear.* So his terror was not to make us afraid. And though his compassionateness towards us is argued from his being tempted, and compassed with infirmities,‡ as we are, that cannot be understood as if hereby he became more gracious and merciful towards us in himself; but his being so, was the more apprehensible to us.

* Acts 3. 22. from Deut. 18. ‡ Heb. 4. 15.

[9.] The steadiness of the course God hath taken in this matter, shews what his judgment was of the fitness of it; who doth all things according to the counsel of his own will, Eph. 1. 11. It is observable, that when our Lord was now about to ascend, he fixes a ministry that he promises his presence unto, always, or every day, unto the end of the world, Mat. 28. 19, 20. Ascending on high he gave (among other) these gifts to men, even to the rebellious, Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, psal. 68. Eph. 4. 8.—11. And that he might put an honour upon this ministry, when he designed the gospel to be preached to Cornelius, and his relatives: though he prepares Peter by a vision, and sends an angel to Cornelius, it was not to preach to him but to direct him to send for Peter to preach to him and his; who tells him, when he fell at his feet, I also am a man, Acts 10. We are human preachers, though from a divine Master and Lord; and of a divine word.

II. But now the mind and counsel of God being sufficiently evident in this matter, both in the fact and in the fitness of it, to make use of such, for promoting the common salvation, as do need themselves to partake therein: we come now to shew, that the ministers of the gospel of Christ ought to be very intent upon the business of their own salvation, conjunctly, with that of them that hear them; and of theirs, with their own. There is a double obligation meeting upon a minister of the gospel; that of the law of nature, and of the law of his office; he is to comply with both. Nature obliges him to intend his own salvation; his office, theirs that hear him. The same authority lays him under the one obligation and the other. For he that is the author of nature, is the author of his office too.

1. He ought so to mind the concern of his people's salvation, as not to neglect his own. This is so evident in itself, that it would be superfluous to speak to it, were it not that we, as well as they to whom we preach, do need to be put in remembrance of very important things, though we know them, 2 Pet. 1. 12. To know and to consider, we not only may distinguish, but do too often separate. And there are divers things to be considered to this purpose.

(1.) That the royal law, as it is called, James 2. 8. which requires us to love our neighbour as one's self, makes love to ourselves; that is, not merely, which we bear, but which we owe to ourselves, the measure of that which we ought to have for our neighbour. And that which ought to be the measure in any kind, should be the most perfect in that kind; and must oblige us to love first our most noble self, our own souls.

(2.) It is gross hypocrisy to seem earnestly intent upon saving other men, and to be neglectful of one's own salvation. It is sin only which endangers both; meant by the mote and the beam, Mat. 7. 3, 4, 5. And our Saviour we see there, stigmatizes such a one, with the brand of a hypocrite, that is officious to take out the mote from his brother's eye, but never concerns himself to cast out the beam from his own eye.

(3.) It is a scandalous and an ignominious absurdity, as the apostle's sharp expostulations imply, Rom. 2. 19,—22. to take upon one's self to be a guide to the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, to take up with having a form of knowledge and of the truth in the law; and to teach others, and not to teach one's self! Preachest thou (as he adds) a man should not steal and dost thou steal? thou that sayest, a man should not commit adultery? dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, by breaking the law dishonourest thou God? This is that which makes the name of God be blasphemed among the gentiles; as he tells us it is written, referring to some texts in the Old Testament, Ezek. 16. 47—52. chap. 36, 22. It is a blackening thing when it can be said, I was keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept, Cant. 1. 6. Our Lord speaks of it as a reproachful proverb, which he, knowing the hearts of men, observed some were apt to misapply to him, Luke 4. (noted to have been in use among the greeks, and which with that empire had reached Judea) physician heal thyself. It would be very opprobrious to us who are in the ministry, if it could be truly said to us, we seem concerned at the diseasedness that appears in our flocks, but overlook the diseases and distempers of our own souls. That was meant for a bitter reproach to our Lord dying upon the cross, He saved others, himself he cannot save. To us if it might be truly said, it must be a just reproach as well as bitter; our saving ourselves being our duty enjoined us, and tending to the saving of others; whereas our Lord's saving himself, in the sense intended by those scoffers, was against the law he was then under: and against his own design tending to overthrow it, and leave them to perish, whom he was dying to save.

(4.) The observable neglect of the design to save our own souls, would defeat and destroy the other design of saving theirs that hear us. For who can think us serious in our preaching, or that we believe ourselves, in what we say, if we manifestly decline ourselves that way of salvation, which we propose to others? We tempt men to infidelity if we live like infidels.

It was a cutting repartee made by an atheistical person, to one, that leading an ill life, yet professed to wonder that the other, the arguments for a deity being so plain and cogent, did not own there was a God; the other replied, he much more wondered, that he who did own him, should yet live as he did! This tends to overthrow all our preaching. Though our Saviour directs to do as they said, who sat in Moses' chair, not as they did; because they said and did not: yet he did not thereby justify those self-repugnant teachers: for his reflection upon them is sufficiently severe. And we are to consider in the case, not merely what man's duty is, but what their dispositions are. Not what they ought, but what they are apt to do. If they think we do but act a part, when we speak never so movingly to them, they will be little moved by all that we can say. They will be more apt to conclude, that we who have studied, and searched into the matters of religion more than they have done, have found some flaw at the bottom, and perceive the very foundations of it to be infirm; and therefore practise not according to the doctrines and rules of it. But that for our gain, because it was the calling we were bred to, and we know not how else to live, we are content, and some way constrained, to keep up the forms we found in use; and maintain them that they may maintain us.

(5.) Yet when it shall be found, as upon strict inquiry it cannot but be, that the foundations of religion are more firm than those of heaven and earth, how dismal will it be to have preached to others and ourselves to be cast aways? 1 Cor. 9. 27. For as by loose, licentious walking, we hazard other men's souls, which we should endeavour to save; so we, more certainly, lose our own. God may save them some other way, and by other, more apt instruments; but we have little reason to expect that we shall save our own, either while we design it not (as if we were to be saved by chance) or, much less, if we counteract any such design. Which we may, most destructively, by that single instance, which the apostle, in that last mentioned place, refers to; an indulged intemperance; or not keeping our bodies in subjection; in servitude, or in a serviceable temper, as the word δελαγωγεω imports, to subdue them into the state of servants; wherein rather than fail, one would use the severity which this other word υπωπιζω there signifies. It is plain, that if we live after the flesh we must die. Rom. 8. 13. There is one law for ministers and people. And it is only by the Spirit we are so to mortify the deeds of the flesh that we may live. How dismal when a minister's own breath poisons him! When the very gospel which he preaches is a

deadly odour* to himself! How horrid when a shepherd is the leader of the epicurean herd!

(6.) But if by neglecting visibly the gospel-way of saving himself, he not only hazard, but actually destroy other men's souls, together with his own, he then perishes under a much heavier load of guilt, than another man can, that was not under his obligations. As his obligation was double, so is his guilt. When sinful, vicious inclination, hath depraved his mind, put out the eye of his practical understanding, so that the blind leads the blind, both fall into the ditch; but he falls much the deeper, having the others destruction charged upon him, together with his own. Such teachers as bind heavy burdens for others, which they will not touch fall under an aggravated woe. And the case is the same with them that prepare, and set before their hearers the most nutritive and delectable fare, which they will not taste. And for that reason, perhaps, the people will not feed on them, because the preachers themselves too evidently appear to have no taste or relish of them.

2. The ministers of Christ ought to conjoin the serious design, and earnest endeavour, of saving them that hear them, with the design and endeavour of saving themselves. They are not to be so bound up within themselves, as only to mind their own things, though of this most noble kind.

(1.) The law of nature obliges them to it, which extends its obligation as far as human nature extends. And must therefore include them with the rest of mankind under the same common notion, namely, them who are ministers, not as they are such; for nature hath not made them ministers, but as they are men. Whom the royal law, mentioned before, requires to love their neighbour as themselves: and therefore to seek another's felicity, not before, but as their own. We are taught to count it an unnatural barbarity, when we see any pressed and pinched by bodily wants and miseries, to hide ourselves from our own flesh, Isa. 58. 7. How much more, if we see immortal souls in danger to be lost and perish, that are of the same make and capacity, with our own!

(2.) The law of Christ, as such, obliges christians to the same thing. Which is not, in this instance, therefore a divers law, but hath a different stamp and impress, as being the law of the kingdom of God in Christ. We are to bear one another's burdens, so fulfilling the law of Christ, Gal. 6. 2. What so weighty a burden can there be upon any man as this, the importance of his eternal salvation? And which is plainly here

* 2 Cor. 2. 16. οσμη.

referred to, when we are required to endeavour the restoring of such as have been overtaken, and lapsed into sin; by which the precious soul is hurt and endangered, should they be left to sink under such a burden. Christians are elsewhere required to have compassion on such as they see in such danger, to save them with fear, and pull them as firebrands out of the fire, Jude 23. These are obligations common to ministers with others. But,

(3.) The law of their own office lays upon them an obligation peculiar, as such, to themselves. What serves their office for, but this, as the principal end and design of it? What is it meant for, but to gather in souls to Christ, and confirm them in him? Because there is salvation in no other; nor is there any other name given among men, by which any can be saved, Acts 4. 12. They are the messengers of the glad tidings of peace. Their business is so well known, even in hell itself, that a spirit from thence speaks it out, These are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation, that is, to human creatures, of whom the possessed person was one, Acts 16. 17.

(4.) They are obliged by the example of their blessed Master. Our Lord Jesus himself, the primary Saviour by office; whom they are both to imitate, and to serve in this merciful design. Christians are so far to imitate them, as they do Christ, (1 Cor. 1. 11.) which implies their obligation to imitate him, as the word Μιμηται, there used signifies. The great salvation, which none that neglect, can escape vengeance, began to be spoken by the Lord himself, then by them that heard him, and so on; by others that succeed in the same office. This is following Christ in the way of imitation, as in the mentioned place. And we are required to have the same mind in us, which was in Christ, Phil. 2. 5. and are told wherein, ver. 6, 7, 8. which read over at leisure, and consider what was that deep humiliation and suffering for? But the salvation of souls. And consider that this is said, as to the saints at Philippi, so particularly to the bishops and deacons there; which shews their common and their special obligation both together. And now can we behold with what compassions and in what agonies, even unto blood, our blessed Lord pursued this design, and not feel a constraint in our spirits, in our lower sphere, and capacity, to serve it also to our uttermost!

(5.) They are obliged by the peculiar advantages they have for this work, and those they expect by it.

[1.] They have special advantages for it from their very calling, being separated to the gospel; taken off from other busi-

ness, to give themselves (as in this context) wholly to this. They are supposed therefore to know more of the concernments of souls; of the terrors of the Lord, (2 Cor. 5. 11.) whence, therefore they are to persuade men; of the nature of sin, and how it entangles men's spirits; of the wiles of Satan, and how he waits for advantages to destroy them; of the foundations of religion, and by what arts they are endeavoured to be subverted and shaken; and by what means and methods they are to be demonstrated or established; of the mysteries of the gospel of Christ, and how they are to be unfolded; to have more special assistances from heaven in their work, according as they faithfully mind it: Christ's promised presence therein, even to the end. These are talents, with others, tending to the obtaining of these, which they are to be accountable for. And hereby they are strongly obliged, with their own, to intend earnestly the salvation of other men's souls.

[2.] They expect great advantage by it: that since nothing is more grateful to our Lord Christ, than the progress of this saving work, he will bountifully reward them that faithfully serve him in it: that if they be stedfast and immovable, abounding in this work of the Lord (as he hath not a greater, now in doing, in this world) their labour in him, shall not be in vain. They shall hear from him, Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord. If they turn many to righteousness (or endeavour it with sincere minds) they shall shine as stars in the firmament. And in the mean time, the honour, and the pleasure of serving that mighty Redeemer, and lover of souls, in so glorious a design, have in them a very excellent reward; and which cannot but be esteemed such by a right mind.

(6.) They are obliged by the exigency of their own case. They cannot, as that is stated, neglect the design of saving other men's souls, without forfeiting their own. If they warn them not, over whom, as watchmen they are set, they perish, but their blood will be required at their hands. It is a mighty trust they stand charged with, which if they discharge not, they are liable to accusation and condemnation, as false and faithless servants; perfidious to the souls of men; traitorous to the King of kings—whose interest they will have betrayed, being his agents and ministers in his kingdom of grace; about the prosperous state of which kingdom, with the successful progress of the affairs of it, he is most deeply concerned.

And now from this conjunct consideration of these two great ends, which a minister of Christ is to propound to himself, I might proceed to consider them severally, and apart; but this the case doth not require, it being easy to sever what

hath been said to the one and the other; nor do our limits allow it.

III. We therefore go on to the more necessary use of the whole. To this purpose we collect,

1. That this world is universally in a very miserable state. For it is the business of Christ's ministers, to endeavour both the salvation of them that hear them, and their own.

(1.) The salvation of them that hear them. This is very indefinite: let who will be the hearers, they are supposed to be such as need to be saved. The object of their ministry is all nations, and every creature, namely, that is or shall be capable of being taught the way of salvation. Therefore all nations are deluged by the destructive evils, from which they are to be saved; and the world is everywhere inhabited by miserable creatures. We are told, that sin and death have passed upon all men, (Rom. 5. 12.) and all the ends of the earth are invited to look unto God in Christ, (as the application of this context, Phil. 2. shews) that they may be saved, Isa. 45. 22. Whereas therefore the ministers of the gospel of salvation, wheresoever they can obtain to be heard, are to endeavour the salvation of their hearers; it shews they can speak to none who stand not in need of saving mercy.

(2.) And that they are also to save themselves as well as them that hear them, more fully shews the absolute universality of the ruin that had befallen this world; that there are among men none to be found that may be employed in saving others, but who are of the lost themselves, and so far drowned in the common deluge of perdition and destruction, as to need his help, as well as the rest, who came to seek and save them who are lost; and to stretch out to him craving hands, with that crying voice, Lord, save us, we perish.

2. The common stupidity of this wretched world, is hereupon most observable and amazing, that so few such cries are sent up to heaven! Men are involved in a common ruin, overtures are made to them of common salvation, but they are in reference hereto destitute of a common sense, that is, of such sense as is common in less important cases. Their misery lies in their having lost God; but little do they apprehend this loss. Amidst their other miseries, they cry out when some that are mightier oppress others, but none says, Where is God my Maker? Job 35. 9, 10. The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if any will understand, and seek after God; but they are every one gone back; or are in an averse posture, none doth this good, no, not one, Psal. 14. and 53. None, till he give an effectual touch to their drowsy spirits; and say, inwardly and vitally, to their hearts,

seek ye my face, so as to make their hearts answer, Thy face, Lord, will we seek. Psal. 27. 8. Preventing grace doth this, otherwise they feel no need of God, they miss him not, are content to be without him in the world; yea, say to him, Depart from us. Distance from him is chosen and desired: from him whose offspring we are, who is the Father of spirits, their parent, their life, their blessedness; of whom they are, and to whom if they tend not, they cannot but be miserable. It is the salvation of the soul that is the end of faith, (1 Pet. 1. 9.) that faith by which we are to come to God, believing that he is, and will be, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; being redeemed to God by the blood of his Son, (Rev. 5. 9.) and who suffered once, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, (1 Pet. 3. 18.) and who upon his suffering intercedes for the same purpose; and is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him, because he ever lives to make intercession for them. But this salvation of the soul, this coming to God, or redemption by Christ, and his intercession thereupon, who looks after? Neither the end, the salvation of their souls, coming back to God; nor his method for attaining this end, are regarded, or so much as thought on. To have this flesh saved from any thing that is grievous to it, every one covets, and endeavours in vain: it must, however, rot in the dust, and be, in the mean time, a prey to worms. Its own father, mother, and sister, will devour it, Job 17. 14. The Father of their spirits would save and satisfy them, but him they shun, and will not know.

Who that observes how men spend their days, even under the gospel, which makes their time a day of grace, wherein they should be working out their salvation, can think they have any concern to be saved? Their life is continual trifling, some pass their days in mirth and jollity; doth this signify any sense of misery, or fear of perishing, and that destruction from the Almighty is a terror to them? These are not more idle, than others are idly busy to get estates, and a name on earth; but what is this to their being saved? They are liable to the common more sensible miseries of life, and they are without God; but this is no misery with them. This misery is their element, and burdens them not. Were their present case, and future danger, in this respect apprehended and felt, how full of outcries would this world be; O we are lost and perishing! Such cries would ring through the earth, and pierce heaven! But the same carnality that is death, (Rom. 8. 6.) and makes them miserable, makes them stupid too, and insensible of their misery. And are these reasonable souls, intelligent, immortal minds and spirits, that are thus stupified! turned into such

clods and stones! O deplorable case! Methinks such an office set up in the world, of men that are to save their own and other men's souls, should make them consider, and bethink themselves, What is it for? It must have had an original, and so it hath a divine aspect, a taste of heaven upon it; and must have an end suitable to the wisdom and grace of heaven, which claims to be entertained otherwise than with neglect and contempt! And indeed this leads to take more notice expressly, in a further inference;

3. That there is a saving design on foot in the world: set on foot by the blessed God himself. Otherwise in so great a ruin as is come upon this wretched world, what could it signify? For any man to offer at saving either himself or others? How vain an attempt were it for any man, out of so deep and horrid a gulf, of impurity, misery, darkness, and death, to think of lifting up himself, and of plucking up others as high as heaven! This intimation carries hope with it. It is a voice from heaven to such as are so employed, as Timothy was, O save thyself, and as many as thou canst besides. It takes away all pretence for despair: God puts not men upon vain attempts. A lively hope ought to spring from hence: and we are saved by hope, (Rom. 8. 24.) as without hope no man would ever design for salvation, or any thing else. Hope is the engine that moves the world, keeps the intelligent part of it in action everywhere. No man could rationally stir in pursuit of any design, whereof he despaired. But as to other designs, men's hopes are commonly self-sprung, and end in shame. But when one can say, Lord, thy word hath caused me to hope: thou hast put me upon aiming to be saved, and to save others, it speaks this to be a just and hopeful undertaking. I will therefore set about working out my own salvation (and with my own, other men's, as far as is within my compass) expecting he will graciously set in with me, and work in order hereto, to will and to do of his own good pleasure, without which all mine will be lost labour.

4. We further collect, That the blessed God is most intent upon this design. That which this supposes, and that which it imports, speaks him intent. It supposes he hath appointed a sovereign Saviour set over this work; otherwise there could be none subordinate. It imports he hath settled an office on purpose; made it some men's special business, to intend (as every one ought) his own salvation, and withal to give himself up to this great work, the saving all he can. An office set up for the saving of souls ought to be a great thing in our eyes; and is a standing testimony for God, how willing he is men should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved.

5. They that bear this office should be highly honoured for their work's sake. For how glorious an employment is it to be instrumental to salvation! to be in any kind saviours! I could tell you of some great princes in the pagan world, that to their other splendid titles have had the addition of *soter, a saviour;* as to some others, the destroyer of cities, hath been given as a name of reproach. And you do know who hath the name of Apollyon, or Abaddon, Rev. 9. 11.

6. It highly magnifies the wisdom, power, and sovereignty of God, that he can, and will make use of so mean instruments, for so high and glorious a purpose. For what end and purpose can be greater than the recovery and salvation of souls, so deformed, miserable, and lost, as the souls of men universally were? And what instruments could be meaner, or more vile, than such as needed to be saved themselves, with the same salvation? That God should make use of them who were darkness, (Eph. 5. 8.) to enlighten the world, (Mat. 5. 14.) of of such as were but sinful flesh, (John 3. 6.) to be able ministers of the Spirit, (2 Cor. 3. 6.) of such as had minds that were enmity against God, (Rom. 8. 7.) to reconcile men to himself, (2 Cor. 5. 20.) these are some of the wonders he works among the children of men. When he hath converted some to use them (first for the converting of others, and then) for the strengthening of their converted brethren.

7. The ministers of Christ are to be examples to them over whom they are set. They are to be so in the beginning of their course, in their first turn to God, though then in a more passive sense, That I might be a pattern, &c. saith the apostle, 1. Tim. 1. 16. and in their after-course, as in this context, ver. 12. Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, &c. They must be leaders in the whole way of salvation, from first to last.

8. Pride in the ministers of the gospel, and in them that live under a gospel-ministry, is a most monstrous absurdity: for what are we, all of us, but a company of wretched creatures, just perishing, and only (at the best) but in the way of being saved! What have such to be proud of?

9. Both Christ's ministers, and their flocks, are under the greatest obligation imaginable unto union. For their case is one and the same, their miseries were the same, their dangers the same. They must all have the same Saviour, the same way of salvation, and the same end; the same state of salvation, which all the nations of the saved are to be brought to at last, Rev. 21. 24.

10. It is an unquestionable thing, that salvation is to be designed for by all sorts. Ministers must aim to save themselves and their hearers, And is the minister to design his people's salvation, and not they their own? They have mean thonghts

of salvation that stumble here, as if they were only to be saved from hell-flames! But to be saved from sin which makes us unlike God! to have his image and his love perfected in us, to be with the rest of the elect, partakers of salvation, with eternal glory, is that mean? 2 Tim. 2. 10.

11. The ministers of the gospel must, some time or other, be taken away from their work. It is time, a limited duration, within which their work and business lie, for the saving themselves and those that hear them. They are to save themselves. This end they are to pursue; and it must sometime be attained. They are not always to labour, and never rest: sometime they are to receive the fruit of this their labour, and the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. As more time passes, their salvation draws nearer than when they believed; they are not always to be in saving, and never saved. In mercy to them, God will translate them; and may it not be in judgment to many, whom they earnestly laboured to save, but who rejected their counsels, and strove against their own salvation! That they may not always labour in vain for themselves, and because they have laboured in vain for many others, they must be withdrawn from their hard and toilsome labour, and enter into rest.

12. The loss is great, and grievous beyond all expression, above all our lamentation, when such are taken away as have made it their business to save themselves, and those that heard them. In their endeavour to save themselves they have been great examples. In their endeavour to save others, they may have been great instruments of much saving good to many a soul. How few are they that drive such designs! How fast doth their number decrease! How fitly may we take up that of the Psalmist, when the godly man ceases, and the faithful fail from among the children of men? And what could be said with greater pathos, Psal. 12. 1. Help, Lord as in a common ruin: Help, help, for God's sake, help, Lord, help! My friends, you are not sensible you have lost such a one, even while you are not yet saved! While you yet need to be working out your salvation! The effectually called, it is true, are saved, 2 Tim. 1. 9, Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.—And (which is in substance the same thing) the regenerate are saved: not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; Tit. 3. 5. But if this were the case of you all, how much yet remains to be done, in order to your full and consummate salvation! You have yet mighty difficulties to overcome; a body of death, which you are not yet delivered from. For are not these some of your groans, in reference to it, O who shall deliver us? A

world full of troubles and snares; your adversary the devil, that goes about seeking whom he may devour: all the principalities and powers of the kingdom of darkness, that you are to contend with, and with whom you are to dispute every step of your way to heaven. And do you not need such a leader in that way? And if any are fallen into drowsy slumbers, do you not need his awakening ministry? If dead, how often hath the blessed Spirit breathed life into you, by his quickening ministry? How often hath God used him to enlighten you, when you have been in the dark; to clear up the great doctrines of the gospel, when you have not distinctly understood them; to establish you in the faith, when you have wavered; to resolve you in matters of practice, when you have been in doubt; to encourage you in your fears and faintings, to comfort you in your sadness and sorrows? I wonder not that there are many weeping eyes, and should much wonder if there be not many aching trembling hearts among you, for what you have lost, and from an apprehension how hard, and almost hopeless it is, your loss should be soon or equally supplied.

He was long in preparing, and forming to be what he was, when you lost him. His station among you in this neighbourhood, when first he undertook the pastoral charge of this church, over which the Holy Ghost made him overseer, required a man of as much wisdom and grace as any such station could well be supposed to do: considering how numerous, how intelligent, and well instructed a people, he was to take the care of. I well remember, that about three or four and forty years ago, being desired to give some help, on a Lord's day, to that eminent servant of Christ, Mr. Greenhill, whose praise is still in all the churches, I then first heard him preach: and (if my memory fail not) he had about that time in hand some part of that excellent discourse of the Almost Christian: I had then the opportunity of beginning an acquaintance with him. His excellent good natural parts, his ingenuous education, his industry, his early labours in preaching the gospel of Christ in his native country, in the city, and in this place: his conjunction and society, for some years, with that excellent servant of God before named; above all, the gracious assistances he had from heaven, gave him great advantages to be a minister of Christ, approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. And his multiplied years, unto the seventieth, with the continual addition thereby, to the rich treasury of his experiences, still improved him more and more: so that there being no decay of his natural endowments, and a continual increase of his supernatural, you had the best of him at last: whereby indeed, your loss was

the greater, but your obligation was also the greater, that God continued to you the enjoyment of him so long; and that in a serviceable state. But when he could be no longer serviceable in his stated, delightful work, it was by the decay not of the inward, but the outward man; so that when he could preach to you, and converse with you no longer, he could earnestly and fervently pray for you to the end. And God did not afflict you, by leaving long among you only the shadow, the outside of the man, and of such a man!

He took little pleasure in embroiling himself or his hearers, in needless and fruitless controversies. The great, substantial, doctrines of the gospel, were his principal study and delight; such as lay nearest the vitals, and the very heart of religion and godliness; and most directly tending to the saving them that heard him. The subjects which he chose to insist upon, from time to time, in the course of his ministry, shewed as to this, his spirit and design. Having formed from the holy Scriptures that scheme of thoughts which satisfied him, and gave him a clear ground, whereupon to preach the gospel with an unrecoiling heart, he loved not to discompose it. His judgment in things which had that reference, being constantly moderate, and unexceptionably sound; remote from rigorous, and indefensible extremities, on the one hand and the other. Hereupon he drove at his mark without diversion; not so much aiming to proselyte souls to a party as to Christ. And to engage men, as much as in him lay, to be sound and thorough christians. Hitherto tended his sermons from year to year. The great subject he had in hand, and which he left unfinished, when God took him off from his public work, was manifestly pointed this way; namely, of the covenant of God in Christ. And his annual course of preaching a sermon on May day, to young men, had the same manifest scope and aim, with which his public labours were concluded. God so ordering it, that his last sermon was this year on that day.

His judgment in reference to matters of church order, was for union and communion of all visible christians, namely, of such as did visibly hold the head, as to the principal *credenda* and *agenda* of Christianity. The great things belonging to the faith and practice of a christian, so as nothing be made necessary to Christian communion but what Christ hath made necessary; or what is indeed necessary to one's being a christian. What he publicly assayed to this purpose the world knows: and many more private endeavours and strugglings of his for such a union, I have not been unacquainted with: the unsuccessfulness of which endeavours, he said, not long before his last confinement, he thought would break his heart. He having openly,

among divers persons, and with great earnestness, sometime before expressed his consent to some proposals, which if the parties concerned had agreed in the desire of the thing itself, must unavoidably have inferred such a union, without prejudice to their principles; and on such terms, as must have extended it much further; else it had signified little. But this must be effected, as is too apparent, not by mere human endeavour, but by an Almighty Spirit poured forth, which (after we have suffered awhile) shall καταρτισαι, put us into joint, and make every joint know its place in the body, (1 Pet. 5. 10.) shall conquer private interests and inclinations and over-awe men's hearts by the authority of the divine law; which now, how express soever it is, little availeth, against such prepossessions. Till then Christianity will be (among us) a languishing, withering thing. When the season comes of such an effusion of the Spirit from on high, there will be no parties. And amidst the wilderness desolation that cannot but be, till that season comes, it matters little, and signifies to me scarce one straw, what party of us is uppermost: the most righteous (as they may be vogued) will be but as briars, and scratching thorns; and it is better to suffer by such, than be of them. In the mean time, it is a mark of God's heavy displeasure, when persons of so healing spirits are taken away. And if it awaken any of us, that will tend to prepare us for the effects of it; which preparation seems a thing more to be hoped than prevention.

But this worthy servant of Christ sees not the woful day, whatever of it he might foresee. His removal makes to many, indeed, a woful day, and that all about him did long foresee. He was long languishing, and even dying daily: but amidst surrounding death, as a relation told me, there was no appearance of any the least cloud upon his spirit, that obscured the evidences of his title to a blessed eternity. Being asked how he did, he said, Going home, as every honest man ought, when his work is done. He was much in admiring God's mercies under his afflicting hand, saying, Every thing on this side hell is mercy: that the mercies he received were greater than his burdens, though in themselves grievous: that he rested upon that promise, that his Father would lay no more upon him than he would enable him to bear: that he expected to be saved only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him. Though he well understood, as I had sufficient reason to know, that Christ's righteousness is never imputed to any, but where, if the subject be capable, there is an inherent righteousness also; that is no cause of our salvation, but the character of the saved. And having before precautioned some as were about him not

to be surprised, if he went away suddenly, he repeated the ejaculation, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; and renewing the former caution, by saying, Remember what I said before, as he sat in his chair, with all possible composure he bowed his head, and without sigh, or motion, expired in a moment. The sighing part he left to others, that stay behind: and I do even feel the sorrows of his most afflicted family, his mournful widow: his sorrowing sons and daughters, his destitute church, with all others that got good, or might have done by his quickening, spiritful, piercing ministry; or had the advantage and satisfaction of his acquaintance and converse.

Your grief cannot but be measured by your love; and your love by his in the several kinds and objects of it: his conjugal, paternal, pastoral, friendly love, as he was an affectionate husband, a tender father, a vigilant pastor, and a pleasant friend. But withal, let your consolations be measured by the proper grounds thereof. It is a most improper, irrational, unchristian way of being comforted in such a case, only to let time wear away our sorrows. It is but a negative, a heathenish, yea a worse than heathenish method of receiving comfort. For I have observed it to be animadverted on, as an intolerable absurdity, by some among the heathens, that time should work that cure of grief and sorrow, which reason and prudence work not. And thus it is plain we shall be relieved, not by holy thoughts, but by not thinking. So it may in time be forgotten, that ever such a man as Mr. Mead, was minister in Stepney! And what is this to Christian consolation?

But we need not wander from the text, for a positive and a solid ground of comfort. Remember it was his business to save himself, and those that heard him. As you have no doubt of his salvation, which I believe none of you have, make sure of your own. Put on, with the breastplate of faith and love, that helmet, the hope of salvation. You are of the day, watch and be sober, as those that are not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ. 1 Thes 5. 8, 9. And then consider(as I doubt not many a soul will bless God for him forever) how glorious a sight it will be to see him, one day appear in the head of a numerous company of saved ones; and say (as a subordinate parent in the apostle's sense, 1 Cor. 4. 15.) Lord, here am I, and the children thou hast given me.

In conclusion. For you of his dear and beloved flock, this may be directive to you as well as consolatory; would you have a pastor, after God's heart? Put yourselves under the conduct, as much as in you is, of such a pastor, as you apprehend will be intent, in all his ministrations,

upon this double end, to save himself and them that hear him. And labour to be perfect, be of one mind, and live in peace, so the God of love and peace shall be with you. 2 Cor. 13. 11. And remember him as one that hath had the rule over you, and hath spoken to you the word of the Lord, and follow the faith of such, considering the end of their conversation; and that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. As you change pastors you will not need to change Christ's, so as to have one yesterday, another to-day, and a third to-morrow. Pastors under the gospel, as well as priests under the law were many, because of death: but our blessed Lord, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, Heb. 7. 24. Therefore do you never think of another Christ, as their doubt was, (Mat. 11. 3.) but cleave to this your great Lord with purpose of heart, till he give you at last, an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom.

Let his mournful relatives, and all of you to whom he was dear, consider what our Lord offered as matter of consolation, in the most trying case of this kind that ever could occur to poor mortals; that is, when he himself was to be taken away from his sorrowing family, and followers. It is but a little while; as if he had said, my words have a plain meaning: a little while, and you shall not see me, and again a little while, and you shall see me; and because I go to my Father. Ye now have sorrow, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you. John 16. 20.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will: working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

A

FUNERAL

SERMON

FOR THAT

FAITHFUL, LEARNED, AND MOST WORTHY

Minister of the Gospel,

THE

REV. PETER VINK, B.D.

Who Deceased September 6, 1702.

TO

THE TRULY PIOUS MRS. MARY VINK,

RELICT OF THE DECEASED.

My dear and honoured Sister,

THE relation I stand in to you, by that union which some years since the good providence of God hath brought about between our families, obliges me, besides what I owe you upon the common christian account, to partake with you in your sorrows, for this late afflicting loss; as I have, according to my measure, in the satisfaction of enjoying so pleasant and delectable a relative and friend. And I would not only bear my own much lighter part of this burden, but (if I knew how) ease and lighten your part. It ought to do much towards it (by helping you to poise and balance your burden) to put you in mind, that you have a greater and nearer relation left. Your Maker is your husband: God all-sufficient, in whom is immense fulness: who can be always present, and most intimately converse with your spirit; who never dies, and to whom your relation is eternal. Which are all, things not agreeable, or possible, to any earthly relative. This God is to be your God for ever and

ever, and your guide unto the death: even in this wilderness, on this side death, where we most need a guide. Nor hath your most tender deceased consort, otherwise left you alone. He hath left you with an observant son and his yoke-fellow, with a dear and only brother, that, it is to be hoped, will severally be found full of dutiful and brotherly affection towards you. And you have genuine relatives and branches remaining to you, daughter and daughter's children, that through God's goodness may be continuing and growing comforts to you.

And this season of your separation from so pleasant a companion and guide of your life, will be of no long continuance. It should occasion you to intermingle thanksgivings with lamentation, that your union and enjoyment continued so long: and for what remains the time is short. Therefore they that lose such relations, are to weep as if they wept not—remembering that the fashion of this world passes away. Especially it ought to be considered, that such a sad parting will be recompensed by the most joyful meeting: when they that have slept in Jesus, God will bring with him; and the survivors, at that day, be caught up into the clouds, to meet their Redeemer (and, no doubt, the redeemed) in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. Wherefore let us comfort ourselves and each other with these words; which have a fulness in them richly sufficient for you, and for,

My dear sister,

Your sincerely affectionate, and

very respectful brother,

JOHN HOWE.

A

FUNERAL SERMON.

Acts 5. 20.

Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life.

THE present speaker in this text is an angel of God; one of those blessed spirits from among the principalities and powers in heavenly places, who greatly delight, as you have lately heard,* and I hope are, God willing, farther to hear, to be concerned about the affairs of God's church on earth. So that we depart not much from our former subject in diverting to this. But whereas the speaker was an immortal angel, and the subject spoken of words of life; these, you may think, are things very remote from the design of a funeral discourse: yet you are withal to consider, that the persons spoken unto were mortal men, Peter, with the rest of the apostles, whose lives were in jeopardy every hour. That they are so mentioned in this history, Peter, and the rest of the apostles; and what we find expressly recorded of him besides, that it was endeavoured the diseased might be put under his shadow passing by; and that he afterwards in this chapter is only named, with the addition the other apostles, making their defence, being convened before the council, (ver. 29.) shews that Peter was more eminently active, vigorous, forward, and zealous in

* Having a discourse in hand about this time, on Eph. 3. 10. To the intent that now unto the principalities, &c.

the work of Christ: but far from the affectation of principality over the rest. Quite another consideration may well be understood to have urged him; and which our Lord seems to refer to, when he said, Go, tell my disciples, and Peter. But he with the rest, we are sure, were all mortals alike. And they were also from time to time, assemblies of mortals to whom they were directed to speak the words of life.

And, my friends, the very name of life cannot but have a grateful pleasant sound to them that dwell in the midst of deaths; to them that find the dark and dismal shadow of death continually spread over the whole region which they inhabit. When they find that death, in all its more gloomy appearances hath so general a power over ministers and people, preachers and them that were to be preached unto; how pleasant is the mention of life, and such a life, as surmounts, as exceeds the sphere where any death can come; a sphere by itself, all full of vitality, and in which death, or any shadow of death, can never find place! To be told of such a life, amidst surrounding deaths cannot but be a pleasant and grateful thing to them that have sense enough, in reference to their present case, and any faith, in reference to the future. Indeed the power of death appears so much the more absolute, and its commission is seen to be of so much the greater amplitude and extensiveness, that it equally reaches to preachers and hearers; must equally reach such men, as these apostle's were, and all the people they were to speak to the words of this life. But so much the higher and more glorious are the triumphs of that life, the words whereof are here mentioned. For it is evident these words do mean and intend a life, into which every thing of death and mortality is to be swallowed up. And therefore though death do stop the breath of preachers, and the ears of hearers, it can never prevail against that word in which this life is wont to breathe. For though all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away; yet the word of the Lord endureth for ever, that word which by the gospel is preached unto us, 1 Pet. 1. 24, 25.

This indeed was an ancient, and very eminent minister of the word of life, whose decease and death occasions this solemnity, and this discourse, now at this time. And it ought to please us so much the more, that while we are now to consider, and lament the death of such a preacher, the word he was wont to preach shall never die. And that we are to consider at the same time, the life which such words do both concern and cause, is finally victorious over death in all the kinds and forms of it; a life hid with Christ in God; whereof he is the root

and original, who avowed himself to be the resurrection and the life; and hath assured the partakers of this life (whether preachers or hearers) that when he who is their life shall appear, they shall also appear with him in glory, Col. 3. 3, 4: But so vain were the opposers of the preaching the words of this life, the obdurate, infidel Jews, that they thought to shut it up, and the preachers of it, within the walls of a prison: for that was the case here. A sort of men full of malignity and bitterness, especially, as you read in the context, those of the sect of the sadducees, who were the prevailing party at that time in their sanhedrim, who believed nothing of a life to come, and had drawn in the high priest to be on their side; and who as we read in the foregoing chap. ver. 1, 2. with the high priest, were grieved (pained as the word signifies) that they (namely Peter and John, though the former was orator) preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead. These are (as they were before) the active, industrious instruments to restrain the preachers, and suppress the preaching the words of this life: they, as is said above, filled with indignation, laid hands on the apostles, threw them into the common prison, and there they think them and their word securely inclosed, and shut up together, that the world should never hear more of them. And did ever malice more befool itself! Could spite ever act or attempt a part more ridiculously absurd! Did they think to imprison celestial light! to bury immortal life! heaven derides their attempt, and exposes them to be derided. For as we are next told, the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, (why made they not him their prisoner too?) and brought them forth, and said, as follows in the text, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life. These two things are here very plain.

First, That by this life is meant a peculiar sort of life; this life, της ζωης ταυτης, *this same life*, that was so highly predicated, and cried up at that time, so that no one could be in doubt what kind of life it was. It is true, out of those circumstances, when we use the phrase of this life, we ordinarily refer to the common affairs of this present life. But that it cannot be so understood here is most evident: the whole business under present consideration had quite another reference. The apostles had no controversy with the rulers of the Jews, about the affairs of this world, or of the best way of living a few days on earth; but what was the surest way of living for ever: and whether believing on Christ as the Messiah, he that was to come, were not that way. Their only contest with the people was (as his own was, while he was yet among them) that they would not come to him that they might have life. So here the angel of

Lord commanding these servants and apostles of his to preach the words of this life, using the demonstrative term ταυτης, this same life, this way of living, or obtaining life, now so much disputed, and which began to make so great a noise in the world; cried up by some, decried by others: this sufficiently distinguished it. There were more obscure notices of it before, but now it was more clearly revealed, and more loudly to be spoken out. The manner of expression signifies it to be a peculiar and more excellent sort of life, very divers from, and far transcending what is common to men; nor leaves us in any doubt of the angel's meaning.

Secondly, That the words of this life must necessarily mean the gospel, namely, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whereof these were the ministers and apostles, bound by special office to diffuse to their uttermost this life and the words of it. Whence, therefore, for our own instruction, we may take up this twofold observation:—That the gospel contains, or is composed, and made up of, words of a peculiar, and most excellent, and noble kind of life: and—That it is the part of the ministers of this gospel, even by angelical suffrage and determination, as they have opportunity, to publish such words, that is, to preach this gospel. In speaking to these two conjunctly, I shall particularly insist on these heads, namely.

I. To shew how peculiar and how excellent a sort of life this is.

II. To shew you how usually and fitly the gospel is so paraphrased, by the word, or words of life, and of such a life.

III. To shew you, that it cannot but be the part of the ministers of this gospel, to preach the words of this life.

IV. We shall also take the incidental occasion of observing to you, and insisting briefly on it, that they have the very suffrage of the angels of God to that purpose, that it is their part and business to preach the words of this life.

V. And so shall make use of all.

I. We are to shew the peculiar excellency of this life. That it is a peculiar sort of life, we have already noted from the angel's speaking so distinctively of it, calling it this life, this same life, that is now every where so much spoken of; that is the matter of present discourse, and of inquiry at this time. And that it is a most excellent, a most noble kind of life, the expression itself also doth not obscurely point out to us. That it is called *this life*, καὶ ἐξοχὴν, life in the highest and most eminent sense. Never talk of this shadow, this dream of life, we are now passing through, but speak to the people the words of

this life; this is a life worth speaking of. And the excellencies of it will appear in these several respects; as,

1. That it is most manifestly divine life; and not at the common rate, as all life is from God; but as it not only proceeds from God, but resembles him, bears his peculiar impress upon it; upon which account it is called the life of God, the divine life, in Eph. 4. 18. where the apostle, lamenting the sad and dismal state of the gentile world, saith, that they were alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, and the blindness of their hearts. It is, in a very special sense, a God-breathed life; not as the natural life, and soul of man were breathed at first from God; but as there was a peculiar divinity in this life, not only as coming from him, but as having in it a chosen dependance on him, and tendency towards him, by its own very essence, which the life of the soul of man, at first, had not. For if a voluntary dependance on God, and tendency towards him, had been essential to the natural life of a man's soul, it had been impossible they should ever have been lost. Such a posture God-ward was agreeable, and con-natural, not essential. But it now is proper and peculiar to this life; though still not essential, as it never was, but more deeply fixed in the soul by grace, than it was at first by nature, to tend to God, as it is by faith derived from him, as is expressed, Hab. 2. 4. Heb. 10. 38. The just shall live by faith; and Rom. 6. 11. Alive to God, as by love it works towards him, Gal. 5. 6. and Gal. 2. 19. I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. The soul was never otherwise dead, than as it was dead towards God; and now, while in the present sense it lives, it lives by, and to him. It being the steady, habitual determination of the soul God-ward, as its first and last, both in itself, and in the design of its implantation. And so is the imprinted image of the life of God himself, so far as the condition of a creature can admit, that is, that as God lives of, and to himself, the soul, by this life, lives not in a merely natural (which is common to all creatures) but in an apprehended, and designed dependance on God, and subordination to him.

2. It is a christian, as well as a divine life: a life that comes from God, not as Creator only, as all life, and as the life of our soul particularly at first did, with its very being, which involves life in itself; but a life that comes from Christ, as our Redeemer, as God-man, and Mediator betwixt God and man, whereof he is the immediate Author, and which he procured by his own death, and by his resurrection from the dead, wherein we partake with him, when we live this life. I am crucified with Christ, saith the apostle, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but

Christ liveth in me, Gal. 2. 20. To me to live is Christ, Phil. 1. 21. He is the Author and Fountain, as well as the end of this life. It is a life owing to the Redeemer dying, 1. Pet 2. 24. He bare our sins, that we might live to righteousness. And we are taught, upon his dying, mentioned before, (Rom. 6. 11.) to reckon ourselves dead to sin, and alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And he is therefore said to be the immediate Donor of this life, John 4. 14. And I am come, saith he, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly, John 10. 10. The beginning, and improvements of this life to perfect plenitude, are all from him; and it is therefore said to be a life hid with Christ in God, Col. 3. 3. He is said to be their life, ver. 4. by all which Christ is signified to be the Author and Giver of this life. And he is as expressly said to be the end of it. His love in dying for us, constraining us no more to live to ourselves, but to him who died for us, and rose again. To which purpose are the words, Rom. 14. 7, 8, 9. Again,

3. It is a pure and holy life, such as, wheresoever it is, cannot suffer a man's soul customarily to mingle with the impurities and pollutions of this world. It is a life that carries up the soul into a purer region, where it draws purer breath, If you live in the Spirit, walk also in the Spirit, Gal 5. 25.

4. It is an active, a laborious, and fruitful life. They that live this life, live by union with Christ; and they that are united with him, abiding in him, bring forth much fruit, John 15. 5. when without him they could do nothing, as it there follows. They that live this life come thereupon, their love abounding more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, or spiritual sense (as the word αισθησις there used, may most fitly be rendered) discerning the things that differ, or approving, or preferring the things that are more excellent, to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God, Phil. 1. 9, 10, 11. This is the tendency of this life. It is a principle, in those in whom it is, tending to usefulness, and common good; and in order thereto, to growth and self-improvement. Again,

5. It is a most generous sort of life, that disdains mean things; cannot feed upon earth and ashes. Such communications it must have, as are suitable to the life of a man's spirit. Herein stands the life of the spirit, in receiving and drawing in communications from God. They that live this life, do hunger and thirst after righteousness, that they may be filled, Mat. 5. 6. They seek honour and glory, and immortality, that they may finally attain eternal life, Rom. 2. 7. This is a noble sort of life, that cannot be maintained, as it was not attained,

by common means; that cannot live upon low, mean, and base things. They that are of the earth can live upon things that spring from the earth; but heaven-born ones must be continually maintained by heavenly communications, beams of light accompanied with vigorous influence that descend from thence.

6. It is a devoted life, sacred to God in Christ Jesus, I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live to God, Gal. 2. 19. For as in the principle, it is an habitual determination of the soul towards God, through Christ: so, in the exercise, it is a continual, or often repeated, self-devoting, or dedicating of ourselves accordingly. A yielding ourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, Rom. 6. 13. And so Rom. 14. 7, 8, 9. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord: and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord, be Owner, and so Ruler, both of dead and living. Then, to whom should we live, but to him?

7. It is finally immortal, eternal life. It is so in its tendency, and it is so in its complete and perfect issue, in its mature state, eternal life, such in the plenitude thereof, every thing of mortality is to be swallowed up, 2 Cor. 5. 4. This is that which the aspirations and groans of renewed souls aim at, not barely to be unclothed, that were a mean thing, only to lay down this flesh that thereby we may escape the troubles, that, being in it, we are exposed to; that would go but a little way; but to be clothed upon with the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, furnished and enriched with all the delights, and glories of the divine presence. Therefore our Saviour says of this life, they that have the beginnings of it, They that drink of this water, it shall be in them a well of water springing up into life eternal, John 4. 14. The spiritual life that renewed souls now live, will be eternal life. They differ not in kind; but the one will grow up into the other. Therefore saith our Saviour, I give my sheep eternal life, John 10. 28. I shall never have done giving, till I have improved the life I have given, to eternal life, in which there will be no ebbings and flowings; but where life shall be perfectly pure, and in its full, mature state, without any mixture of death, or deadliness. As any thing is said to be pure, that is full of itself, without the mixture of the least thing that is alien, or disagreeable thereto. Every thing of mortality shall be swallowed up in this life.

II. We are to note to you, according to the order proposed,

the frequency, and aptitude of this paraphrase of the gospel, (words of life) or of what is equivalent thereto. For that the gospel is meant by it, is out of question. It is all one, as if the angel had said, Go, preach the gospel. That some such phrase is usual to signify the gospel they can well tell, that are not strangers to the Bible. Sometimes this phrase is used to this purpose in the singular number, as Phil. 2. 16. Holding forth the word of life. Sometimes in the plural, as in the 6th of John's gospel, ver. 68. Thou hast the words of eternal life. And sometimes instead of life is put salvation, which is the same thing. To be saved, and to live this life is all one, whether you consider salvation begun, or salvation consummate: salvation begun, is but this life begun, He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, 2 Tim. 1. 9. When he regenerates any, he is said to save them. He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Titus 3. 5. And that complete, consummate salvation, should be signified by this life consummate and complete, is obvious and familiar, the phrases salvation and eternal life, being so promiscuously used in Scripture to signify the same thing, that many places need not be quoted, Acts 13. 26. To you is the word of this salvation sent. Eph. 1. 13. The word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. And not perishing, or being saved, is expounded by having eternal, or everlasting life, John 3. 15, 16, 17. And for the aptness of it, or that the words that compose and make up the gospel, are fitly called the words of life, will appear upon several accounts: as,

1. Inasmuch as this word is the means of begetting this life. James 1. 18. Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. In regeneration is infused the first principle of this life. And our Saviour prays for his disciples, John 17. 17. Sanctify them by thy truth; thy word is truth. And sanctification, in the rise and beginning of it, is nothing else but regeneration.

2. Inasmuch as this word improves this life, or is the means of improving it, and carrying it on towards its perfect state, 1 Pet. 2. 2. As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. It is the means of our spiritual growth.

3. Inasmuch as this word carries in it the promise of this life in the most perfect state of it. 1 John 2. 25. This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life, chap. 5. 11, 12. This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life. This is a re-

corded thing, and is the final and terminative promise of the gospel. All the promises of it run into this.

4. The gospel is the rule of that judgment, by which all that shall partake therein are finally adjudged to eternal life, to this life in perfection, Matt. 25. 46. Those that are absolved by our Lord Jesus Christ from the condemning sentence, and have the saving sentence past upon them, of them it is said, They, namely, the righteous, go into life eternal, just immediately from the tribunal of their judge; which sentence, and judgment, is according to this gospel. God will judge the secrets of all hearts, according to my gospel. Wherever that impress is to be found, gospel righteousness, it distinguishes them that belong to Christ, and marks them out for eternal life. These things fall under the former observation; the other two, which are to succeed, belong to the latter.

III. That it is the part of the ministers of the gospel, as they can have opportunity, to preach the words of this life. For the making out of this, I shall speak to these two things:—1. to shew, that it ought to be their design, and end, to help souls into this state of life:—2. that they ought to preach the gospel, or the words of this life, in order hereunto.---That ought to be their end: and this their work, in order to this end.

1. It ought to be their end, to help souls into this state of life. For,

(1)It is the end of their office, therefore it ought to be their end. It would be unaccountable, that they should design a diverse end, from the proper end of their office, or that they should not design that. Now the gospel is, by its designation, to be the ministration of spirit and life unto souls, 2 Cor. 3. 6.

(2.) They ought to design the bringing of souls to Christ, to get them into Christ, who is the Fountain of this life. You will not come to me, that you might have life, saith our Saviour, John 5. 40. And sure it is the business, and ought to be the design, of the ministers of the gospel, as much as in them is, to bring souls to Christ, and to counterwork the disinclination that is in men thereto. You will not come: but we will do all that in us lies to persuade you to come, and to come for this end, that you may live.

(3.) It undoubtedly ought to be their end, to have souls under their ministry, regenerated and born again. This they ought to design, and this is the very beginning of that state of life; and they are therefore entitled fathers, in reference to this their great design and business. If you have had ten thousand instructors, yet you have not had many fathers; for I have begotten you to Christ, saith the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 4. 15.

You were regenerated by my ministry. And this ought to be every minister's design, that souls be regenerated by their ministry. So the same apostle speaks of that servant of Philemon's, and his own son Onesimus; I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Phil. 10.

(4.) They ought to design the perfecting of souls unto eternal life. For this end was the ministry given, in all the degrees and kinds of it; namely for the perfecting of the body of Christ, as you find, Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13. And he gave some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And then is this new man perfect, when this new life is mature in him, and grown up to its fulness.

2 As that ought to be their end, so this ought to be their work, in order to that end, to preach this word of life, as they can have opportunity. This will appear several ways; as,

(1.) They are commanded so to do. Christ commands it, Go teach all nations, &c. Mat. 28. 19. His apostle gives it in charge, even before God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, to preach the word, to be instant in season, and out of season, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. And in the former epistle, having before given the same charge, to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, 1 Tim. 4. 13. He afterwards, in reference to this, and many other precepts, urges his charge before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, adding, and the elect angels, to observe these things, &c. And here there is a command from God by an angel, Go, and speak to the people in the temple, the words of this life. The obligation by this precept, given the apostles with circumstances, lies in substance, upon all that are ministers of the gospel of Christ.

(2.) They are directed how to do it, as well as commanded to do it. The great God instructs his prophet Ezekiel, say to them, as I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel, Ezek. 33. 11. Words are put into his servant's mouths, even these words of life.

(3.) They are threatened if they neglect to do it; as in the 8th verse of that 33d, of Ezekiel, If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall

die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

(4.) There are encouraging promises of great reward, (though that reward is all of grace) to them that succeed in this work. They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as stars, Dan. 12. 3.

(5.) They have special assistance, according as they depend and seek it from the blessed God, in this work. He abets them in it. Hereupon they strive according to his power that works in them mightily, Col. 1. 29. Though all have not assistance equally, yet all have what is suitable to the pleasure of the free Donor, when they faithfully engage and persist in this blessed and glorious work.

(6.) They are assured of acceptance in it, though they succeed not. So pleasing is this work to the blessed God, the endeavouring to bring souls into this state of life: Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, Isa. 49. 5. This, indeed, is spoken principally of Christ himself; but subordinately of all that serve him in this work. So saith the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16. We are unto God a sweet savour (or odour rather, as the word οσμη more properly signifies) of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the odour of death unto death: to the other the odour of life unto life. And this lay with a mighty weight upon his spirit. O that ever we should be the savour of death unto death to any! Who is sufficient for these things! But whether of life or death, we are a sweet odour to God in Christ, as to both; when he sees the sincerity of our hearts, and how fain we would fetch souls out of the state of death into this life. So grateful and pleasant to him is the work effected of saving souls, that the attempt and desire of it is not ungrateful.

IV. We are farther to shew, that this is the part of the ministers of the gospel, to preach the words of this life, even by angelical suffrage and declaration. We have the concurrence in one, of that whole most excellent order: for among them can be no disagreeing votes or sentiments, to put us out of all doubt that this is our business. And that is a great additional enforcement of it upon us. But here it is requisite to do these two things:—to shew how far only the angels can be concerned in a matter of this nature: and—that though they are concerned no farther, yet we have here sufficient evidence of their suffrage, and complacential approbation.

1. How far only they can be concerned in matters of this nature.

(1.) Not so far as to do this work themselves. They are not

to be the preachers of this gospel; God did not think that fit. If that had been the known and stated course, the apostles might have replied, upon their being sent to preach this gospel; You that are an immortal angel, whom no violence can touch or hurt, go you and preach this gospel. No, they were to do no such work: by the counsel of heaven this work is committed to men. In that marvellous conversion of the apostle Paul in his way to Damascus, he is sent to Ananias in the city, to be told by him what he was to do, Acts 9. 6. And when there was that special regard had to Cornelius's prayers and alms, that God was resolved he should not want the express discovery of the gospel of Christ; he sends an angel to him, not to instruct him himself; but to direct him to send for Peter, as you find Acts 10. and the following chapter, who was to speak to him words, by which he and his house were to be saved, as appears by comparing those two chapters together. So that they are not to do this work themselves. Nor,

(2.) Are they so far concerned, as to confer the office. The office of a preacher doth not come from an angel. When the very angel saith this to these apostles, they were apostles and ministers of Christ before, he doth not make them such; nor is that God's way of conveying the office. No, it comes from Christ himself originally: he gave the first commission, Go, and teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, Mat. 28. 19, 20. So that the same office comes from Christ, to the end of the world. Though the persons that first received the commission were to continue but their own short time; yet the commission is continued to such as should, in several ages, succeed them, and still from Christ; but by other appointed means, which he hath settled, and which remain stated in his church; those that are in that office of preachers or ministers themselves, conveying it to others, who shall according to fixed gospel rules, be found qualified for it. But the business of angels, wherein God hath been pleased to employ them, in reference to these affairs of his church, is only sometimes to determine circumstances, as the angel here to these apostles; now is the time, Go forthwith to the temple, and preach to the people the words of this life. The obligation to the thing did not come from the angel, but the determination of the season, and place, for that time. So we find as to other circumstances. The apostle Paul is directed by an angel appearing in the likeness of a man of Macedonia, to go and preach to the Macedonians, saying to him, come over, and help us, Acts 16. 9. Thus God does when he thinks fit; but we are not warranted to expect the signification of his mind

this way; he having appointed other means that are sufficient But yet,

2. Notwithstanding that angels are concerned no further than you have heard; yet that they may be concerned, and have been concerned so far, is an evidence of their complacential approbation of the thing. And this will appear partly by the consideration of the nature and temper of those excellent creatures; and partly, by the consideration of several concurrent things, of which the holy Scripture gives us notice.

(1.) Consider their very nature, unto whom their sanctity, and their benignity is their very nature, in this their confirmed state. We are not to think that this angel, this messenger sent from God, conveyed his message, as if it passed through a dead trunk, that could be no way affected therewith; but as one highly savouring his message, taking great complacency in it. It was pleasant to him in the delivery, thus to direct these apostles of our Lord, Go to the temple, preach to the people the words of this life; your immediate call is from the prison to the temple, to teach the people, how they may be set at liberty from the bonds of death, worse bonds than yours. So much we may collect from their habitual sanctity and devotedness to God, the dutiful, ready compliance, and conformity of their will to the good and acceptable will of their Maker and Lord, and the peculiar benignity of their nature, that they were glad to be thus employed; it was welcome work to any one of them that carried this message.

(2.) Several other things concur, mentioned in the holy Scripture, to make us apprehend their complacential approbation of so grateful an errand, as,

[1.] The solemn jubilee that they held upon our Lord's descent into this world upon this saving design. Then an innumerable multitude of the heavenly host are brought in triumphing together, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will towards men, Luke 2. 14. This appears to have been their common sense, and so, no doubt, was the sense of this angel at this time. They all celebrate the descent of our Lord, upon his saving design coming down into this world, to be the light of men, as it is expressed, John 1. 4. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. A luminous life it was, that he came to bless this world with. And when the angels did celebrate this descent of his, with so much joy and jubilation, it was in pursuance of a proclamation that had before passed through all the spacious heavens, when he brought his first begotten Son into the world, it was said, and let all the angels of God worship him, Heb. 1. 6. They were all to adore the Redeemer, as such, because he vouchsafed to be a Redeemer to such as we were, buried and lost in death.

[2.] Consider the ordinary stated course of their ministration what that is, and whither it tends, you find expressed, Heb. 1. 14. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation! Heirs of salvation, and heirs of eternal life, are the same, as hath been noted before. This they in their stated course pursue; this is the design of their ministry, to be helpful to those who are to be the heirs of salvation.

[3.] We may collect it from the joy that they express for the success of the gospel of this kind. Where they observe it to succeed, if in the conversion but of one sinner, Luke 15. 10. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, if but one sinner repenteth. The heavens are hereupon filled with joy, the angels rejoice that one is now added to their happy number gained from under the power of death, and satan, the great destroyer of souls.

4.] The prospect they have, that all that partake of this life, here in the beginnings of it, shall partake with them, in the eternal life, and blessedness of the future state. All that are here converted, and regenerated, they are by degrees, coming to the general assembly, and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. 12. 22, 23. All this is plain evidence that there is a complacential concurrence and suffrage of angels to the ministers of Christ, doing their work, preaching the words of this life, according as they have opportunity.

V. The use of this you may easily apprehend might be vastly copious, but we must be within necessary limits.

1. We may learn hence, that such as the gospel is, such ought our attendance to it to be. There ought to be a correspondence between what the gospel in itself is, and our manner of attending the dispensation of it. Doth it consist of words of life? then so ought it to be attended to, as containing the words of life, the words of this life, this noble, and most excellent sort of life. Methinks this should strike the consciences of some: I wonder if it do not of any! How few do attend the dispensation of this gospel, as apprehending it to contain the words of such a life? In what agonies of spirit should we attend upon the dispensation of this gospel, if we understand the matter so? They are the words of the most excellent kind of life that we hear, when we hear the gospel of Christ truly preached. This ought to carry a sting and pungency with it to the hearts of such as upon inquiry, (when did I attend upon the gospel, as containing the words of life?) cannot give to their own hearts, and consciences any satisfying account. Let the inquiry proceed.

further, have I got life by it? Did it ever enter into my heart, as the word of life? Did I ever so much as design, expect, or wish that it should? What shall be said to such, that if they answer truly, must give it against themselves?

2. We may learn hence, that when God is pleased to put such a dignity upon poor mean men, as to speak to men by them, and about so great concerns, the affairs of this life: things so high and sublime as the words of this life import: we ought hereupon both to acknowledge God's wisdom and compassion towards us; and be sensible of our obligation highly to esteem them for their work's sake.

(1.) We ought to acknowledge the wisdom and compassion of God, that he hath chosen this way to treat with men: that he doth not always, as he did once, speak to the Israelites, by thunder and lightning, and a terrible tempest, and a voice of words, which voice they that heard, entreated they might never hear it any more; and thereupon desired Moses that he would speak to them from God, for they could not hear such a voice, but they must die for it. No, God speaks to men by men, like themselves, who have the same nature, and the same interest, that are to be upon the same bottom with them, and preach the same gospel of salvation, by which they are to be saved themselves. And,

(2.) We are to honour such, as he puts this honour upon, for their work's sake; to esteem them highly in love on this account, 1 Thes. 5. 13. How beautiful are the feet of them, that bring glad tidings? Rom. 10. 15. How welcome their approaching steps! How graceful is their motion towards us! They that labour in the word and doctrine, are upon that account worthy of double honour, 1 Tim. 5. 17. And all this not for their own sake, but for their work's sake. For the greatest instruments that ever were in the world, employed in this work what are they? That great apostle Paul, counts himself as nothing; though not behind the chiefest apostles, yet a mere nothing; so he nullifies himself, diminishes himself to a thing of nought, a perfect nullity. Elsewhere, I laboured more abundantly than they all, saith he, yet not I! 1 Cor. 15. 10. Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 1 Cor. 3. 5. Who is Paul? As if he would say it cannot be told; too little a thing to be seen or known! or that any notice should be taken of him. We cannot, indeed, have too mean thoughts of ourselves; so little we are, compared with the greatness of our work: and none can have so mean thoughts of us, as we ought to have of ourselves, who should know ourselves best, and better understand our own little value, than any others can. But when any esteem the ministers of Christ for their work's sake,

they only express a respect to him that sends them, to the message they bring, and to their own souls, that are in such a way so tenderly cared for.

3. We may learn hence, how peculiarly spiritual and intellectual this life is, which such words do so nearly concern. Do you know any life besides, that is produced by words, and by words maintained and improved? No words can otherwise affect us, than as they convey a sense into our minds so as to be understood, and into our hearts and spirits, being inwardly received and believed there. This must be an intellectual and most pure sort of life, that depends upon words, that can be begotten by words, and improved by words, and perfected by words. It shews it to be a sort of life far above the sphere of this bodily life; this bodily life is not to be begotten or maintained by words. You cannot by words recover life into a dead finger, much less into a dead corpse. And again, what admirable words are those that can make us live? Transmit life into the very centre, and make our hearts live! It is true, it is not the mere words, but divine breath animating those words, that begets this life: but that still proves it to be a spiritual life. The divine word hath a peculiarity with it: that, indeed, through the efficacy of a divine blessing accompanying it, makes the ordinary means available, for the sustaining of our natural life; man lives not by bread only, but by the word that proceeds out of God's mouth; much more is his vital word necessary to the production and maintenance of the life of our souls.

4. Hence we may collect how dismal and sad their case is, that sit from time to time with dead souls under the words of life! Year after year there are words of life spoken and breathed forth, in those assemblies where they are hearers; yet when the truth of the matter comes to be told, must say, I feel nothing of this life in my soul; my heart is dead still, is still a stone or a clod! No words that I have heard, have awakened, quickened, melted, purified my heart, warmed and inflamed my heart! Dead I was in trespasses and sins, and so I remain notwithstanding all the words of this life which I have heard! This is a dismal case; when it was God's chosen way to make his word the ministration of spirit and life to souls, if it do not breathe in these words, wherein can it be expected to breathe?

5. We may collect hence, that if, by angelical suffrage, it ought to be the business of ministers to preach the words of this life; then, undoubtedly, by angelical suffrage, the words of this life are words worth the hearing; worth attending and listening to. An angel would have been loth to have been the messenger to these great worthies, the apostles of our Lord,

charging them to go and preach in the temple to the people a jargon of impertinent, idle stories. No; but when he saith, Go, and preach to the people the words of this life, that leaves the matter out of all doubt, that here was a ready concurrence both in judgment and complacence of the angel hereto; and that in full effect, he pronounced these things worth listening to. Though we cannot suppose him so assuming, as to think he could by his approbation add any thing real to his authority who sent him; yet as to the reputation of the message, with us, it is not without its weight: as it makes a great difference, whether a prince signify his mind, in this or that affair, by a person of honour, or by a foot-boy. Therefore when any of you have heard the words of this life, with neglect and disregard, you have set your judgment against the judgment, at once, of the great God, and of the glorious angels of God: it signifies as if you thought yourselves wiser than God, and than any angel in heaven. They esteem these words worthy the most serious attention and regard; but you look upon them as trifles, not worth the regarding. Worms of this earth, mushrooms lately sprung up, mean abjects, but beginning to crawl, set their mouth and heart against heaven; oppose their rash, presumptuous judgment to the judgment of the supreme Lord, and of those wise sages, the blessed and holy angels, that stand always in the presence of God, and hear his wisdom! The vanities of this world are thought worth the regarding; but the words of eternal life are counted unworthy to be regarded, or listened to! What absurd insolence is this? to persist in a practical judgment, so directly contrary to the judgment of the wise and holy angels; and, as is evident, of God himself, who sent this message! When such men do meet, is not all their talk vanity? running upon the things only of the earth and time, mere impertinency at best to such as have souls to save! But also are not bold, profane jests, about things most sacred, usual ingredients in their conversation? namely, what is most opposite to such a design! These things, they reckon, sound well in a coffee-house, or a tavern: but how do they sound in heavenly places, whither the report presently flies up as may be collected from Eph. 3. 10. To the principalities and powers in the heavenly places is made known by the church (that is, in, or about the affairs of the church) the manifold wisdom of God. Which cannot but imply their animadversion upon the follies of men, counterworking that wisdom. Nor can the censure of so excellent creatures, and of so bright understandings, be lightly esteemed by any, but most stupid minds. And if such an addition signify nothing, why doth the apostle, having given a charge before God,

and before Jesus Christ,' add, and before the elect angels?

6. Learn farther, that if any servants of Christ have faithfully, in a continued course, to the end of their time, but intent upon this business, preaching the words of this life, their memory ought to be very precious to us, when they are gone: they who have been employed in this work, called to it by God; it is all one whether his mind were signified to them by an angel, or any other way. For it was not an angel that gave the authority, but only conveyed this particular command, as hath been noted. When God in his ordinary method hath called forth a servant of his to preach the words of this life, and he hath laboured in it faithfully to the uttermost, the memory of such a one ought to be very dear and precious to all, to whom he was known, and that have had opportunity of hearing from him the words of eternal life, or that shall receive a faithful account of him. We are so directed and taught, Heb. 13. 7, 8. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the work of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. And he still as much requires the same thing as ever he did.

And truly such a servant of Christ was this my dear and worthy brother, the very reverend Mr. Vink, whom God hath lately taken from among us. He was the son of a noted citizen of Norwich: nor will equal judges of his true worth think it a despicable degree of lustre added to that city, that such a man was born there. His ancestors were early protestants, when the reformation was struggling for a birth in Flanders. Where, when the persecution against that profession began to rage, the zeal and fervour of their religion not admitting to be concealed, or suffering them to temporise, providence ordered their seasonable transportation to that city of refuge, which became native to their following posterity, and among them to this worthy man; who hath often been heard to say, He reckoned it a greater honour to have descended from so pious ancestors, than if he could have derived his pedigree from the greatest princes. He was, indeed, designed for multiplying the offspring of the everlasting Father; and seemed formed for this work from his entrance upon the stage of this world: so were those things very early interwoven in the frame and temper of his soul, that were to be the elements of great future usefulness in this kind of service. For, in his very tender years there appeared very early religion, great seriousness, an habitual awe and reverence of the divine majesty; insomuch that none could observe, when he first began to be a fearer of God.

Which pious disposition of mind was in conjunction with so great a propensity and addictedness to books, with desire of learning, as was very unusual at that age, even in his childhood.

And very early was his preparatory endeavour for that noble employment to which he afterwards betook himself. For as nature and grace appeared to have betimes combined to frame him as an instrument for such service; it was soon very evident, that in the former, God had inlaid a deeper foundation, enduing him with singular parts, above the common rate; which as they came gradually to shine out, in the great improvements he had made, under instruction, in a little time; there appeared such quickness of apprehension, solidity of judgment, strength of memory, quickness of fancy, without exorbitancy, as are seldom found to meet together: and these were accompanied with so spontaneous diligence beyond what the usual methods of education obliged him to, that in his tender years, while yet under the eye of his parents, they have thought it requisite sometimes to hide his books, lest he should injure himself by over intent and close study. So that he was ripe for a university much younger than others ordinarily are. Accordingly he was sent up in his fourteenth year to Cambridge, where he remained many years a fellow, and great ornament of Pembroke-Hall, even beyond the time of his taking the degree of bachelor of divinity; in which time he had treasured up a large stock of all useful learning, and might be fitly styled a universal scholar. But religion governing the whole course of his studies, kept him steady to his great end; and made him most intent upon such things as might render him most useful for his designed work. The original languages, with such rational learning as was subservient to theology, and then theology, and the study of the holy Scriptures themselves.

For diversion he was no stranger to history, namely, civil, which was fundamental but more diverting; as well as ecclesiastical, which was more immediately necessary to his purpose. And among his other accomplishments, his skill and accuracy in the latin tongue, was, as I have been otherwise informed, much remarked in the university; so that the professor in the chair, when he took the above-mentioned degree (as was reported by the eye and ear-witness) disputing *pro forma* with him, after he had somewhat longer than ordinary opposed him, he still answering in neat and elegant latin, said, Mr. Vink, I only so long continued my opposition to you, to give you opportunity to entertain the auditory with that judgment and eloquence, which have appeared in your answers. And that to express himself politely in that tongue was become habitual

and familiar to him, appeared in that writing, in that language, a weekly account of the more remarkable things that occurred to him in the course of his life; which since his death, hath come, to my view; though in such a case a man only writes to himself; yet I have observed therein such strictures of elegancy, both of style and phrase, as signified it was become impossible to him, if he writ any thing, not to write handsomely, and as might become both a christian and a scholar.

This narrative was continued until his growing infirmities put a period to it, some months sooner than to his life itself. The mention of it here, you see, was occasional, and somewhat digressive. Therefore, to return, when he had passed through the long course of his academical studies and employment; London, whither his fame had now reached, could not long want such a man. Hither he was called; and here he shone a bright light in two churches of this city successively, namely, Saint Michael's in Cornhill, which he easily quitted upon another's claim; more from an indisposition to contend, which was little suitable to his calm temper, than from defect of title, could his friends, that so highly valued him, have prevailed with him, to admit of its being disputed, but they had the less reason to be urgent upon him, for that he was so immediately chosen to a neighbour church, where he continued preaching the words of this life, till August 24, 1662, when not satisfied with some things in the act that then took place, he calmly quitted his station, but not his ministry; which he never refused to exercise, when desired in distinct assemblies, when they had only the favour of a connivance. But his more ordinary course was, after he was deprived of his former public liberty, to preach for many years, as the apostle Paul did, in his own hired house; whither his great abilities, and most lively vigorous ministry, drew an assembly not inconsiderable; whereto he both dispensed the word, and (to such as were qualified, and desirous) the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at certain seasons. And this course he continued, especially that of preaching in his house, till bodily disability made it impossible to him; which then he deeply lamented. Yet did he not decline all communion with the established church. Whereupon he had experience of the haughty, supercilious temper of some men's spirits, on the one hand, and the other; who assume to themselves an interdicted, unhallowed liberty of sitting in judgment upon other men's consciences; and adventure to censure them, as men of no conscience, that abandon not their own, to follow theirs; taking notice, sometimes, with just regret, that he incurred the anger of two sorts of men; of some, that he went no farther; of others, that he went so far.

Looking into his memoirs, I found that rich vein of religion and godliness, running throughout the whole, that I think no

serious man could read them without being very deeply affected therewith. Week after week, whatsoever was more remarkable, relating to himself, his family, or the church of God, is punctually set down, and intermixed with most pious ejaculations, "My God, and my All." If any trouble occurred, "Yet God is mine, and I am his." You every where discern the breathings of a holy devout soul. Ejaculatory supplications are very frequent for his relatives, and domestics, The Lord sanctify them, the Lord wash them, the Lord protect them, lead them by the truth and counsels. On all occasions that spirit of prayer, and universal godliness discovers itself all along, mixed with the greatest tenderness and compassion that I have any where met with. If any one were sick in his family, his dear consort, his son, daughter, or daughter-in-law, his most beloved brother, or if a servant, male or female, it is noted down, with his *suspiria*, the breathings forth of earnest supplications on their behalf. And afterwards upon their recovery, most solemn thanksgivings. But if any one died, then such self-humiliation, such lying low before the Lord, such yielding compliance with the divine pleasure, with the design of spiritual improvement thereby, as I believe, hath been seldom seen. And in whatsoever case, there are expressions of a steady trust in God, in reference to all his affairs, both of this world and that which is to come. If any difficulties came in view, upon the mention thereof, he presently subjoins, "But I will trust in God; he will shew me the plain, and the right way, wherein he would have me to go. His charity to the distressed was always flowing, and very exemplary; but much more the pity which wrought in his heart towards such, whose miseries and necessities were such, as it was never possible for him to relieve proportionably to the largeness of his soul. He in the mean time suffered the calamity of every one whose case came to his notice. His humility was such, as did shine through all his other excellencies. He was, indeed, a great man in every one's eyes but his own. No one ever thought meanly of him, that knew him but himself. His love of solitude, and retirement was peculiarly remarkable. No man had more opportunity, in his circumstances, to multiply friends and acquaintance; but I never knew any one who minded, and studied it less; yet where once he was acquainted, there could not be a more pleasant and delectable friend. It was remote from him to seek acquaintance: nor did he need; it was enough for him to receive those, that were so kind to themselves, as to seek his. And it is evident, that love of solitude is peculiar to those, who, through the grace of God, and especially, a sort of self-benignity,

have been capable of becoming good company to themselves. For empty persons, or such as are only full of malignity, men of ill minds, and conscious to themselves of ill design, for such I do not wonder, that, of all things, they care not to be alone. They can never be grateful company to themselves. But he had laid up such a treasure of human and divine knowledge, that I know not where he could find pleasanter company than his own. And his special gratitude for divine mercies was very observable. I have found, in his memorials, he was much in admiring God, that he had done so much for him and his, and more especially for the helps he had from heaven in the performance of his ministerial work. Blessed be God for the assistance he gave me such a day. And very particularly at the Lord's supper. Blessed be God for what hath past between him and me at his table; blessed be God that his bonds have taken hold of my soul!

Though his temper, and the chosen circumstances of his life, kept off from him in great part, more frequent occasions of communicating to the world the rich treasures wherewith his mind was stored, yet when such occasions have occurred, he neglected them not. But while, through his own continuing dissatisfaction, he remained excluded from a public station; besides his constant ministerial labours, in a private way, he embraced other occasions that providence offered, of doing such work as became much more public; and wherein he did more than speak from a pulpit to a single congregation of hearers, speaking from the press to the world, as any should think fit to be his readers. Divers of his excellent sermons, have been long extant to common view, wherein being dead, he yet speaketh. An account of which, though elsewhere given,* it is not unfit here to repeat. As, before his ejection, he had one sermon in the first volume of the Morning Exercises, preached in the church of Saint Giles, upon original sin; so after it, he had another, in that against popery, upon the grounds of the protestants' separation from the church of Rome. Another, upon the worth of the soul in the continuation of the Morning Exercise Questions, with another, on gospel grace the best motive to holiness, vol. 4. And to these I must add that valuable performance of his on the acts of the holy apostles, in the supplement to Mr. Pool's annotations of the Bible (by mistake ascribed to another worthy person, who hath to me disclaimed it, and assured me it was Mr. Vink's.) And it is a satisfaction to me, that I have his concurring judgment

* In Mr. Calamy's Abridgment, &c.

in the interpretation of this text. Who writing upon it, when he could little apprehend, his own funeral sermon, was, so many years after, to be preached from it, tells us, that though, some admit of an hypallage in the expression "the words of this life," and join the pronoun to the other substantive, reading it, These words of life.—Because by this life is ordinarily understood the present temporary life, as in 1 Cor. 15. 19. Yet he says, there needs not this translatious sense; by this life the angel might very well understand, eternal life, and salvation, for that was it which the sadducees denied, and for the preaching of which life, the apostles were imprisoned. To which purpose also the learned Doctor Hammond speaks in his annotations on the same place.

The words of this life he preached to the last, and lived it, in its initial state, as he now lives it (being in the kind, the same life) in its perfect, eternal state. And we may now put in him with those holy men (as he speaks in the argument, which he prefixes to this book) who having lived answerably to their profession and hope, do, when we read these things, seem to speak unto us, and tell us (what they say was inscribed upon the statue of some deified hero) *si feceritis sicut nos, critis sicut nos; if ye shall live as we have done, and suffer as we have suffered, then shall you be* (glorious and happy) *as we are.* And yet such a life as this must end, a life transacted at such a rate! Whither should this carry and direct all our thoughts and aspirings? I bless God we have such instances of many, of whom we must say, it is impossible but that such men are got into a good state. A great confirmation of the truth of our religion. We must be assured such a one cannot be lost in a grave; his works must follow him into a higher region. But I add,

7. That, since they who do preach the words of life, do yet themselves die, let us attend upon their ministry accordingly. We have such and such to preach to us the words of life; but they are mortal men, and must not preach to us always. Therefore let such a thought take place; take we heed that we do not lose them, while we have them: O let the words of life, which they preach, be entertained as such. Our Saviour saith of John the baptist, he was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. You can rejoice in no such light but for a season. You may say, if such and such that are now preaching to us the word of life do drop, God can raise up others in their room to preach the same word: and I hope he will, that when such a one as I drop, he will raise up some other to preach to you at another rate, with more warmth and vigour, and success, than ever I have done. But

yet you are to consider that you are mortal too, as well as we. And admit you have those who shall far exceed them that have gone before; yet you know not how short your time may be under them. Therefore whatever your hand finds out to do in this kind, do it with all your might. Labour to catch at the words of this life, as once one in distress did at words of a much inferior concern, and when a meaner life, hung in doubt. We are continually hovering between life and death! how fast are we dropping away from one another! Every one that dies from among us, doth, even dying, utter such a voice. Amidst so many deaths, admit, draw in, as vital breath, the words of this life. Dread, as the most frightful of all deaths, that the very words of this life should be to you the savour of death unto death.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

W. Mason, Printer, Chichester.

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